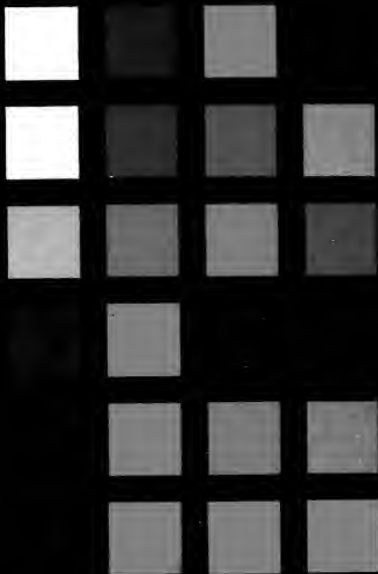


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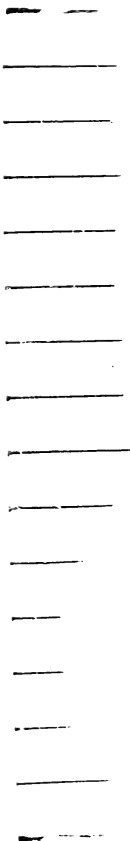
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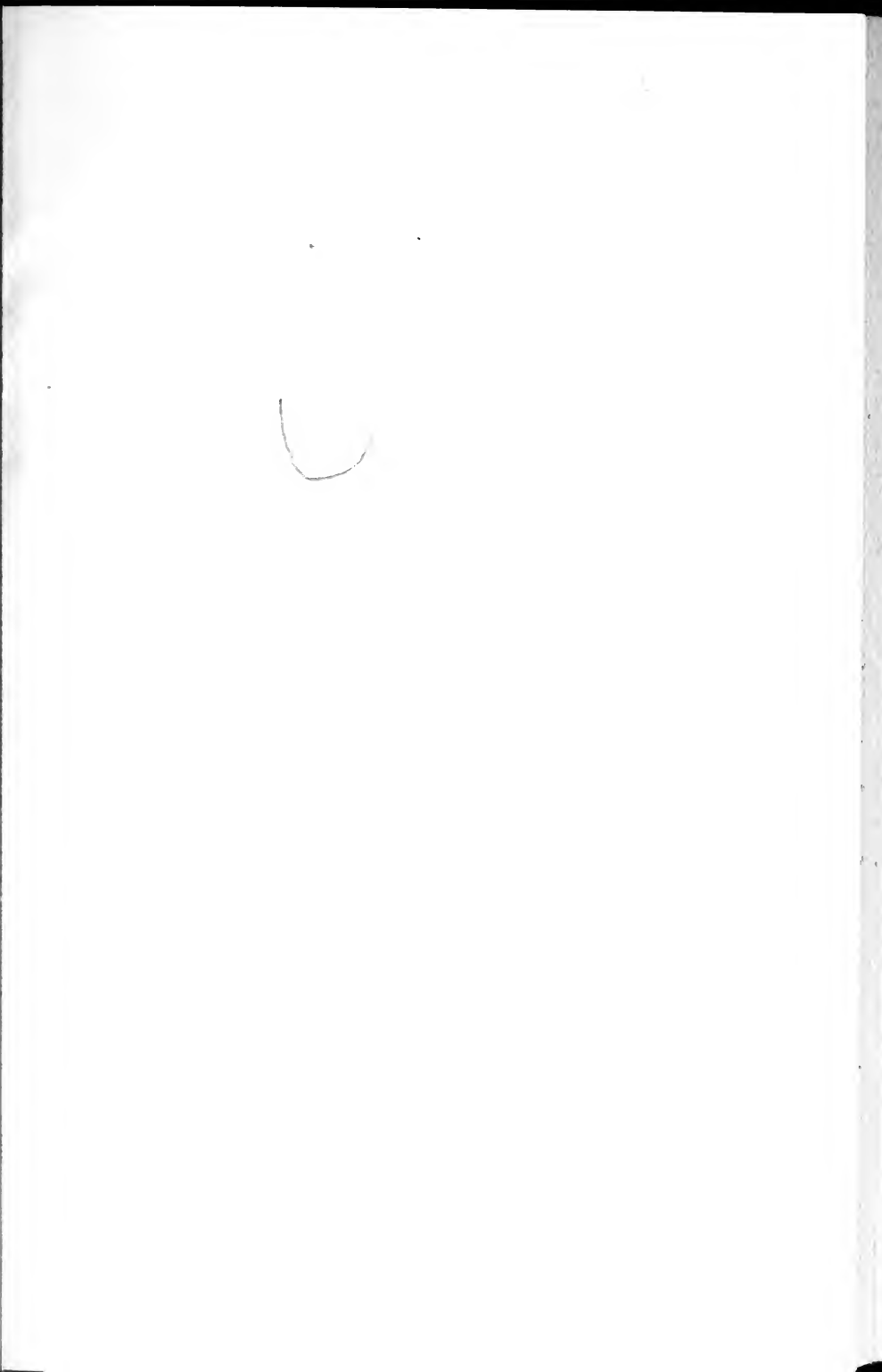
THE WONDER ROAD

BOOK I: FAMILIAR HAUNTS

II: ENCHANTED PATHS

III: FAR HORIZONS

Fairy Tales Selected by
The Institute for Character Research





CAP O' RUSHES

FAR HORIZONS

Fairy Tales Selected by

EDWIN DILLER STARBUCK

and

FRANK K. SHUTTLEWORTH

Assisted by

*Bernice Bauercamper, George Beiswanger, Elena M. Close,
Elizabeth Dawson, A. Kathryn Gunn, Ivy C. Husband,
Linnette I. Nelson, Anna Hawley Searles, Grace P. Smith,
Harold C. Vedeler, Emma J. Worstell*

THE INSTITUTE OF CHARACTER RESEARCH

STATE UNIVERSITY OF IOWA

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1930

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FOREWORD

A lad told me the other day that he doesn't believe in fairies. I do, and told him so. He and I couldn't agree. He was young and wise. You couldn't fool him, he said, about Santa Claus or any of it. I am grown-up and foolish. I believe in Santa Claus—the spirit of Christmas cheer. He is very real and very precious to me. I believe in fairies and like them. I saw them dancing in the light of the bright eyes of my little friend. I felt them in the tenderness with which he spoke to his mother. I heard them in his play. Are you young and wise, or are you grown-up and foolish?

Fairies are fairies. They dwell in the Land of Make-Believe. Gaze at them too steadily and they flit away. Play with them and they stay. Grasp them firmly in the hand and they crush like withering petals or die like a butterfly with crumpled wings. Open the hand and they dance upon your fingers. Open the windows and doors of your heart while you play and work; then just see if the fairy folk do not come. They will help you stay young. Their nimble feet and graceful wings will take you over many a delightful turn of the Wonder Road and beckon you toward the House of Wisdom.



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*Over the hills and far away
That is the tune I heard one day.*

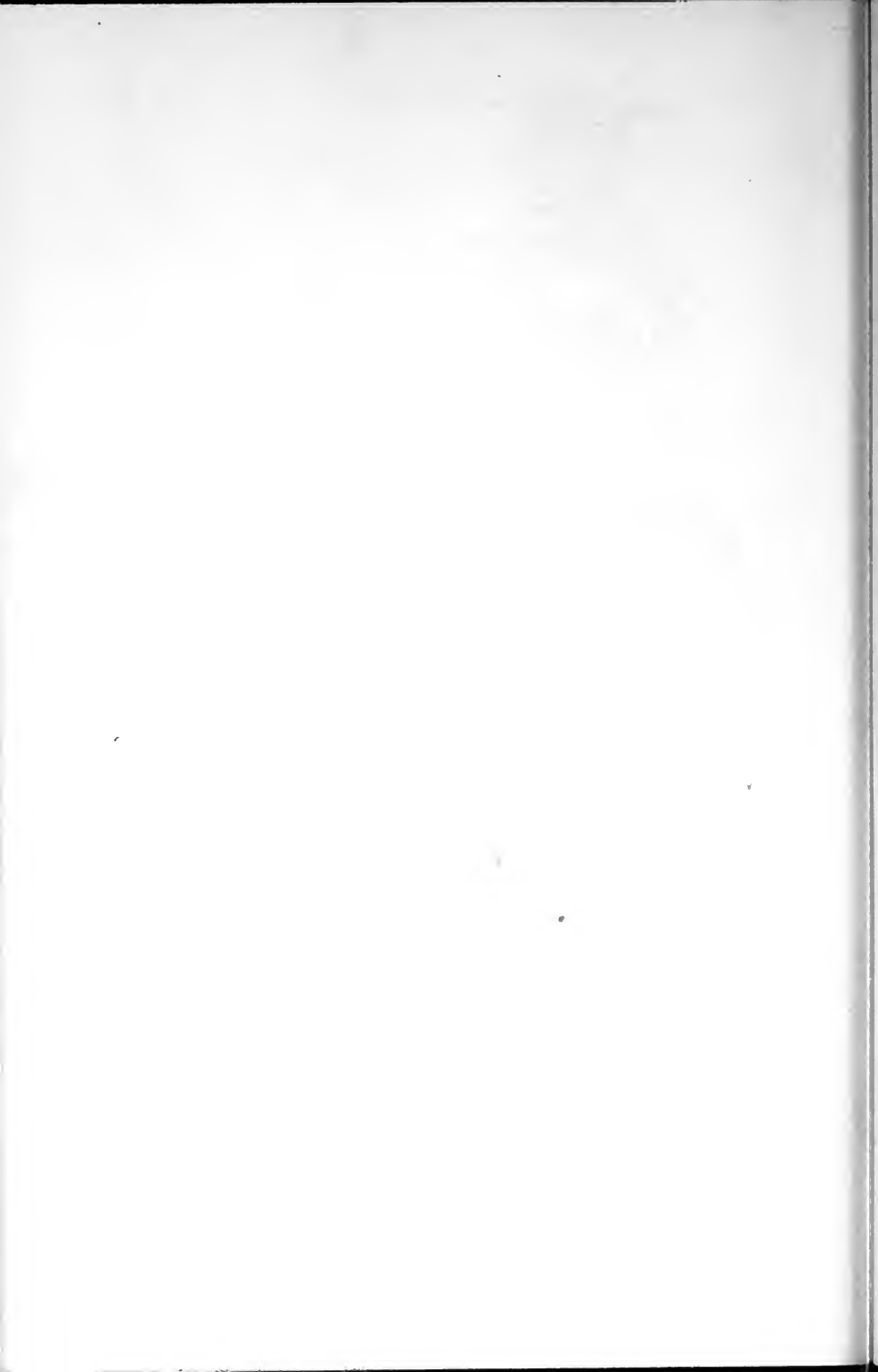
FIONA MACLEOD.

*For they heard in the dreamy dawn of day
A fairy harper faintly play.
Follow me, follow me, little children,
Over the hills and far away;*

*Where the dew is bright on the heather bells,
And the breeze in the clover sways and swells
As the waves on the blue sea wake and wander,
Over and under the braes and dells.*

ALFRED NOYES.

FAR HORIZONS





CAP O' RUSHES

Retold by Constance Smedley Armfield

ONCE upon a time there was a gentleman who lived in Sussex; he had three daughters, Mary, Elisabeth, and Rose. They were good girls, and fond of their needle, but for every three stitches Rose put into her work, her sisters put one. Mary played on the spinet and Elisabeth was a wonderful singer and knew so many ballads that no one had ever been able to count them. But Rose, she just sat there embroidering a muslin gown with a posy of every flower

in the garden, for when she was not sewing, Rose dearly loved to prune and water and snip her flowers, and she was wishful to finish the gown for the Harvest Home when her father made a grand feast and invited all the neighbors. As the summer waned, the sisters had to prepare for the feast, and Mary made pastries and sweetmeats, and Elisabeth made cakes and comfits, but they had to call for Rose to cut the gold leaf and fruit paste, and make pretty knots and flowers on their goodies; and when it was time to go out into the meadows and gather boughs and garlands for the hall, Rose was the one to weave them together, and Rose it was who pulled the bays and rosemary to strew in the chambers and guest rooms. She was up betimes, but with here a stitch and there a stitch, her gown was finished.

And so the harvest came. The sheaves were carried, and the grain was garnered, and the hay was stacked: the garrets were full of fruit and roots, and the great hall thronged with guests and servants, when the gentleman called to his three daughters and bade them make merry with the company. Mary played on the spinet and Elisabeth danced till everyone's eyes were round as O, and then the gentlemen told his daughters to stand forth before the company. They came up to the dais where he sat, accordingly; Mary and Elisabeth in their fine satin gowns, one pink as a peach, one pale as a lily, and Rose in her white lawn, which her fingers had enriched with dainty stitches, and it would be hard to say which looked the prettiest.

But when their father beheld Rose's simple gown, his brow darkened, for she did not look as handsomely clothed as the others.

"Now," said the gentleman, "my barns are full, and my garrets and cellars; but here stand the treasures I

value most dearly, and to show you all what good affectionate girls these be, I will ask you, dear Mary, how much you love me?"

"Better than my life," said Mary, as pink as a peach.

"Why, that is a good answer," said the gentleman. "And how much do you love me, dear Elisabeth?"

"Better than the whole world," said Elisabeth, as pale as a lily.

"Why, that is a famous answer," said the gentleman, and then he turned to Rose in her simple muslin gown that her clever fingers had made pretty, and said, "And how much do you love me, dear Rose?"

But instead of the fine answer he expected, "Better than fresh meat loves salt!" said Rose, and blushed as red as her namesake.

At this answer everyone in the hall burst out laughing, for it was so different from anything they thought she would say, and she looked such a shy, blushing, little maid.

"What!" cried the gentleman, "you would shame me before my neighbors and friends? If you love me no better than that, get out of my house, for I'll call you no daughter of mine."

Now maybe, if Rose had stayed quiet till the morning, he would have forgiven her, but Rose always said what she meant, no more and no less, and took it that everyone else did the same.

Out she went, therefore, just as she was, while the rest of the company feasted, and ran along the high-road, not knowing where to go or what to do with herself, now she was turned out in the twinkling of a jiffy.

She walked up hill, and through dale, until clouds gathered and big drops of rain began to fall, and

there she was in her fine lawn gown and nothing to cover it.

But beside the road ran a stream where rushes were growing, and Rose stooped down and gathered a lapful, and soon wove a fine cap to cover her hair and a cloak to cover her gown. Her pretty face peeped out from under a thatch of rushes so that she looked as if she were walking about in a little hut. Her curly brown hair was covered up, and no one would have guessed this queer figure to be a rich gentleman's daughter. But she was safe from the rain and wind, and the rushes made a pleasant shivery noise as she ran along, and now she was all covered up like this, she did not feel so shy.

Presently she saw a great house standing back from the road with high yew hedges all round it, and she crept along by the hedge till she found a lowly gate, on which was written, "Servants' Entrance." Rose went in here, and knocked at the kitchen door.

How the servants laughed when they saw her standing there in her cap o' rushes.

"But, I haven't anywhere to go," said she, "and I ask no wages, and I can do all the work that no one else likes doing if you will let me come in and give me a roof over my head and a bite and sup now and then."

"What are you dressed out like that for?" said the cook, as well as she could for laughing.

"So that I can do the dirty work," said Rose. "I've no fear of messing these clothes, and when they wear out I can fetch a plenty more from the river."

"It would be nice to have her clean the pots," said the cook, and another maid said, "And to rake out the ashes," and another said, "And to polish the pewter." So they told her to come in.

She would give no name so they called her Cap o' Rushes, and after they were tired of teasing her, she settled down comfortably enough, for they gave her a tiny room under the stairs with a cupboard in the wall where she laid by her fine muslin gown, unseen of anyone; and the kitchen window overlooked the herb patch, and a thousand sweet scents came in to cheer her as she rubbed the pots and pans. What a sight of them there were, blue and brown and red and russet, of good Sussex earth and glazed with as rich and ripe a color; there were jugs with posies of flowers on them, and fine big mugs for the maids and men to drink out of, and Cap o' Rushes took pride and pleasure in the pots on the dresser and the pans on the wall. She scrubbed the lids of the pans till they shone like mirrors and all the maids could see their faces in them, and she cleaned the bricks till they looked as fresh as wet fishes; and she kept the hearthstone red, and cleaned out the oven after every baking; and when the cap and the cloak of rushes grew soiled, she would run to the stream for a bath and come back in fresh rushes. But she would never say a word about who she was or where she came from.

One day there came news that a grand ball was to be given at a big house near by, and the servants had permission to go across the downs, and slip into the gallery where the minstrels played and have a sight of the grand doings. They were all busy, using the saucepan lids for mirrors, and tying on ribbons and fixing posies on their bodices, until the kitchen looked like a bed of flowers; the only servant who did not dress up was Cap o' Rushes, and she slipped away to her little room and the servants thought she was tired and went off without her.

But Cap o' Rushes was washing herself and plaiting

her hair; and when the house was quiet and not so much as the cat was left (for the cook had carried it under her arm to see the sights), Cap o' Rushes took out her beautiful gown and slipped into it. Then she put on her cap and cloak of rushes and ran over the down in the dusk, and if anyone saw her, he thought her an old woman maybe. When she reached the big house, the lights were shining in the windows, and the music was playing sweet and lively, and Cap o' Rushes flung off cap and cloak and laid them under a mulberry tree beside the kitchen door.

There was not a soul about, for all were watching the dancers, but when Cap o' Rushes was looking for the staircase to the servants' gallery, who should come by but a fine young man, no other than her master's son. He took her for a guest, and asked her to dance with him, and the music was so sweet and lively, she could not say no. So he led Cap o' Rushes out into the ballroom and everyone was surprised to see so fine a lady in so beautiful a gown. As for the master's son, when he danced with her and saw the pretty posies on her gown, each worked as neatly as if it were growing there, he could not say enough, and when he heard Cap o' Rushes had embroidered every stitch, he cried out at such industry and said she was surely the cleverest lady he had ever met, as well as the fairest. He was so pleased with her looks, and liked her quiet ways so well, he danced with her till the time came for the supper. In the confusion and the crowd, as all left for the supper room, Cap o' Rushes slipped her hand from his arm, and turned through a little side door and ran out of the house; there she picked up her cap and her cloak and ran home by the light of the big red moon. She was in her own little room and fast asleep when the servants returned from the ball, full of talk of the

lady in the wonderful gown, patterned with a hundred posies, whom the master's son had danced with and whose name none knew.

When they came down in the morning, Cap o' Rushes was scrubbing the pails, and had to listen to their chatter, for of course they thought she knew nothing about the ball.

"You did miss a sight, Cap o' Rushes," said they. "The sweetest lady in the world was there, with a gown that took all eyes. Would I were a lady like her, with nothing to do."

"Something to do is better than nothing to do, to my thinking," said Cap o' Rushes, splashing her pails till they shone like dew.

"Ah, but, Cap o' Rushes, as she danced, the sweetest scents floated out of the flowers on her gown, till one would say one was in a garden."

"Sweet smells come out of clean saucepans," said Cap o' Rushes, "when sweet herbs go into them."

"What, Cap o' Rushes, do you think yourself as good as she?" said they.

"I'm as satisfied to be me as she is to be she," said Cap o' Rushes and that was all they could get out of her.

Next week there was another ball, and all the servants went off to see it, but Cap o' Rushes stayed behind. Then she washed herself and plaited her hair and put on her fine lawn gown and covered herself with her cap and cloak of rushes and ran over the downs. She slipped off her cloak and cap and hid them under the mulberry tree, and then she walked in as bold as anything to the dancing hall. The master's son was there looking out for her, and directly she appeared, he came to her, and they danced together again.

"I've been thinking of those pretty posies on your

gown ever since I saw you," said he. "Why, there seem more flowers than I can count. It would take a whole evening to look at each one, and each is prettier than the other."

So they danced together all evening and talked of the flowers and she told him the names; pansy and lily and daffydowndilly; and cowslip and oxlip and daisy and violet and gilly; and carnation and rosebud and ever so many more. She had put a posy of lavender on one sleeve and a posy of rosemary on the other, and she had put a posy of moss rosebuds over her heart. It was plain she loved every flower and herb in the garden, and the master's son said he had long been looking for a maid of simple tastes.

But when they were all trooping in to supper, she let go of his arm and lagged behind and slipped out of the side door, and picked up her cap and cloak of rushes and ran away home.

She was safe in her bed and asleep when the servants came back, and when they came down next morning, there she was rinsing her milk pails, as fresh as a lark.

"Oh, Cap o' Rushes, you did miss something last night," they cried.

"What was that?" said Cap o' Rushes.

"The lady was there again, and looking better than ever. One couldn't see how pretty her gown was in one evening; I wish I were a fine lady and had gowns with posies worked on them."

"Anyone can make posies on her gown," said Cap o' Rushes, "as long as she has fingers."

"Not like that," cried the servants. "I wish I could lie abed all day and dance all night as ladies do."

"I lie abed all night and dance all day," said Cap o' Rushes, and as they cried out, "*You* dance all day?"

she said, "Some dance with their toes and some dance with their fingers," and truly, the way Cap o' Rushes was polishing the pails made her fingers dance right deftly.

"You still think yourself as good as she, then," said the servants, and Cap o' Rushes said what she had said before: "I'm as satisfied with me as she is with she."

Next week there was another ball, and again the servants trooped off in good time, eager to see the fine lady, and again Cap o' Rushes stayed behind till they had gone, then washed herself and plaited her hair and put on her gown with the posies; she covered herself up with the cap and the cloak of rushes and ran all the way there, and slipped them off and put them under the mulberry tree, and then she marched into the dancing hall and there was the master's son standing at the door, waiting for her.

This time, as he danced with her, he told her he had found out something about her.

"What is that?" said Cap o' Rushes.

"You're faithful," said the master's son, "and you have good sense," said he, "and whom you love, you love truly."

"How did you find that out?" said Cap o' Rushes.

"You're faithful to your pretty gown," said the master's son, "the other ladies change their fine clothes for every ball, and are not content to wear the same gown twice; but you have worn yours three times. That shows good sense, for the more I look at it, the more I like it; and it shows you love truly, that you do not grow tired of the pretty posies you have worked with such patience; and so we can have the pleasure of looking at them again and again."

"Those are good reasons," said Cap o' Rushes sweetly, "but nobody ever grows tired of flowers, so I do not

see why it is any great thing not to grow tired of their pictures."

"I wish I had a picture of you," said the master's son. "Will you never tell me your name?"

Cap o' Rushes just shook her head and looked very sweet.

"Well, here is a ring," said the master's son. "Will you take it?"

"Yes," said Cap o' Rushes, and pulled a sprig of rosemary from her hair and gave it to him in exchange.

"Now you will not run away from me to-night," said the master's son, but Cap o' Rushes did not say yes or no, and when everyone trooped in to supper, she let go his arm, lagged behind, slipped out of the little door, and put on her cap and cloak from under the mulberry tree. But the master's son was quicker to-night, and she had hardly put on her cap and cloak of rushes, when he was out of the side door looking for her.

Cap o' Rushes slipped round the mulberry tree and bent nearly double; then she hobbled away across the downs and the master's son passed her and never noticed her, so full were his thoughts of the fine lady in her posy gown. When he was out of sight, Cap o' Rushes ran faster than the wind and was safe in her little room and in bed when the servants returned.

Next morning they found her polishing the saucepan lids as fresh as a daisy, and said they to her, "Oh, Cap o' Rushes, you did miss something last night, and you'll miss it now for ever, for the dances are over and you'll never have a chance to see the fine lady. When she went out of the room, it was as if the sun had gone out. I wish I were a fine lady to be missed like that."

"Ah, you'd miss me if I were to go," said Cap o'

Rushes, becoming a little more saucy, now she heard how well everyone spoke of her.

"How do you mean?" said they.

"Your pans wouldn't shine as they do now," said Cap o' Rushes. "'Tis as if the sun has gone out of the kitchen when I take them down from the wall."

Well, they all told Cap o' Rushes she was no match for the fine lady, but Cap o' Rushes said again, "I am as satisfied with me as she is with she," and as there was no contradicting her, they had to leave it at that.

But that evening the cook came down in a fluster and said, "Oh, Cap o' Rushes, I want your cleanest saucepan."

"Why, supper is over," said Cap o' Rushes, very surprised.

"But master's son has come back from searching the woods and downs for the fine lady," said the cook, "and sore at heart and heavy of heart he is because he cannot find her, so his mother has sent down to ask for some good hot gruel."

"Let me make it," said Cap o' Rushes. "Gruel needs a sight of stirring and you have been cooking all day."

"There's no one who stirs more carefully than you," said the cook. "I'll be glad for you to do it while I eat my own supper."

So Cap o' Rushes made the gruel, and poured it into a porringer, and then she dropped a slip of rosemary therein to give it flavor, and weighted it down with the ring the master's son had given her the night before the ball.

Then she slipped into her little room and put on her fine gown with the posies, and then she put her cap and cloak of rushes over it and went back to the kitchen looking just the same. Presently down came one of

the maids, saying the master's son wanted to see the cook. Dear, but she was frightened!

"You must have let the gruel burn," said she, and was in a dreadful state, not wishing to get Cap o' Rushes into trouble, and yet not liking to take the blame on herself, for she was a good cook and proud of her cooking.

But when she got upstairs the master's son was pacing up and down the dining room for all he had come home so tired, and directly he saw the cook, he cried, "Who made that gruel?"

"'Twas I," said the cook, in a terrible fluster.

"'Twas not," said the master's son. "Say who it was and you shall have this purse of gold."

"It was Cap o' Rushes," said the cook.

"Who's Cap o' Rushes?" cried the master's son.

"I don't rightly know," said the cook, "but she's down in the kitchen." At that, up jumped the master's son and went down the stair quicker than the cook could follow him.

"Where's Cap o' Rushes?" said he, and there she was, scrubbing the saucepan the gruel had been made in.

"Here," said Cap o' Rushes, though she had no need to say it for all could see at once who wore such a cap.

"Where did you get this ring?" cried the master's son, showing it.

"From him who gave it to me," said Cap o' Rushes, looking at him very steadily. When he saw her pretty face peeping out of the rushes, he began to guess, and as all the servants were standing round with their eyes popping out of their heads, Cap o' Rushes threw back her cap and cloak, and there she was in the pretty gown covered with posies.

How everyone marveled at seeing her among them

like that, and the master's son led her upstairs to his mother who was very kind to her and said Cap o' Rushes would make a fine wife.

So a marriage was quickly called for, and a great feast ordered, for which invitations were sent far and near, even to Cap o' Rushes' father. But she did not say a word about who she was. On the day before the feast, she went down to the kitchen, and said to the cook, "I want you to dress all the dishes without salt."

"Not a pinch?" said the cook, very surprised.

"Not the least little grain," said Cap o' Rushes.

"Why, that will make everything taste very nasty," said the cook. "Everything will taste of nothing at all."

"That doesn't signify," said Cap o' Rushes.

"Please yourself," said the cook, and prepared the wedding dinner without any salt.

Well, after they were married, the feast began, and first one dish was passed and then another, but a nastier, queerer meal no one had ever tasted.

"Why, there's no salt," said the master's wife, and the master said, "There's nothing fit to eat."

But at this Cap o' Rushes looked at her father. He had been served with one dish and then another, and another, and now he pushed them all away and burst out sobbing. Everyone asked what was the matter and he cried: "I once had a daughter and asked her how much she loved me and she said, 'As much as fresh meat loves salt,' so I thought she did not love me at all and turned her out of my house. Now she has vanished from my sight for ever and great harm may have come to her. But I know at last she loved me best of them all."

"Indeed she did," said Cap o' Rushes, and threw back her wedding veil so that her father could see her,

and there was his own dear daughter. What is more, there she was in the gown with the posies which he had despised, for she had vowed and declared she would be married in no other.

Then there was great rejoicing, and the cook came forward and asked permission to serve them another dinner. "For," said she, "I have prepared one already; I knew fresh meat would be nothing without salt."

There was more rejoicing at this, and all went without a single hitch. Nor did Cap o' Rushes stay out of the kitchen after she married, but ruled well and wisely over the great house, and taught the maids to work posies on their gowns, and next time there was a ball, everyone danced together and there was no peeping from corners. "For," said Cap o' Rushes, "one cannot have too many to share a good thing."

A tale of England retold by Constance Smedley Armfield in her collection *Wonder Tales of the World*, seventeen stories elaborating and transfiguring the old folk tales; copyrighted 1920 by Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York. Reprinted with their permission.



THE BAR OF GOLD

Retold by Lilian Gask

LONG years ago there lived a poor laboring man who never knew what it was to sleep in peace. Whether the times were good or bad, he was haunted by fears for the morrow, and this constant worrying caused him to look so thin and worn that the neighboring farmers hesitated to give him work. He was steady and frugal, and had never been known to waste his time in the village inn, or indulge in foolish pleasures—in fact, a worthier man could not be found, and his friends agreed in saying that he certainly deserved success, though this never came his way.

One day as he sat by the roadside with his head on his hands, a kindly and charitable doctor from the town close by stopped his carriage to ask him what was the matter.

"You seem in trouble, my good man," he said. "Tell me what I can do to help you."

Encouraged by the sympathy in his voice, "Weeping

John", as he was called, poured out his woes, to which the doctor listened with much attention.

"If I should fall sick," the poor man finished by saying, "what would happen to my little children, and the wife whom I love more dearly than life itself? They would surely starve, for even as it is they often go hungry to bed. Surely a more unfortunate man has never been born—I toil early and late, and this is my reward." And once more he buried his face in his hands, while bitter sobs shook his ill-clad shoulders.

"Come, come!" said the doctor briskly. "Get up at once, man, and I will do my best for you. I can see that if you do not kill worry, worry will kill you."

Helping the poor fellow into his carriage, he told the coachman to drive straight home, and when they arrived at his comfortable mansion, he led him into his surgery.

"See here," he cried, pointing to a shining bar in a glass case, "that bar of gold was bequeathed to me by my father, who was once as poor as you are now. By means of the strictest economy, and hard work, he managed to save sufficient money to purchase this safeguard against want. When it came to me, I too was poor, but by following his example, and keeping a brave heart, in cloud and storm as well as sunshine, I have now amassed a fortune that is more than sufficient for my needs. Therefore, I will now hand over to you the bar of gold, since I no longer require it. Its possession will give you confidence for the future. Do not break into it if you can avoid it, and remember that sighing and weeping should be left to weak women and girls."

The laborer thanked him with much fervor, and hiding the bar of gold beneath his coat, sped joyfully homeward.

As he and his wife sat over the fire, which they were now no longer afraid to replenish, he told her all that the good doctor had said, and they agreed that unless the worst came to the worst, they would never touch that bar of gold.

"The knowledge that we have it safely hidden in the cellar," said his wife, "will keep from us all anxiety. And now, John, you must do your best to make a fortune, so that we may be able to hand it on to our dear children."

From that day John was a changed man. He sang and whistled merrily as he went about his work, and bore himself like a prosperous citizen. His cheeks filled out, and his eyes grew bright; no longer did he waste his leisure in lamentations, but dug and planted his little garden until it yielded him richly of the fruits of the earth, and the proceeds helped to swell the number of the silver coins in his good wife's stocking.

The farmer who had before employed him when short of hands, was so impressed with his altered looks that he took him permanently into his service, and with regular food and sufficient clothing John's delicate children grew strong and hardy.

"That bar of gold has brought us luck," he would sometimes say blithely to his wife, who held her tongue like a wise woman, although she was tempted to remind him that the "luck" had come since he had given up weeping and lamentations concerning the future.

One summer's evening, long afterwards, as they sat in the wide porch, while their grandchildren played in the meadow beyond, and the lowing of the cows on their peaceful farm mingled with the little people's merry shouts, a stranger came up the pathway and begged for alms. Though torn and tattered, and gaunt with hunger, he had an air of gentleness and refinement,

and, full of compassion, the worthy couple invited him in to rest. They set before him the best they had, and when he tried to express his gratitude, John laid his hand on his shoulder.

"My friend," he said, "Providence has been good to us, and blessed the labor of our hands. In times gone by, however, I was as wretched as you appeared to be when you crossed the road, and it is owing to a stranger's kindness that I am in my present position."

He went on to tell him of the bar of gold, and, after a long look at his wife, who nodded her head as if well pleased, he went and fetched it from the cellar, where it had lain hidden all these years.

"There!" he exclaimed. "I am going to give it to you. I shall not want it now, and my children are all well settled. It is fitting that you should have it, since your need is very great."

Now the stranger understood the science of metals, for he was a learned man who had fallen on evil times. As he took the gleaming bar in his hands, while murmuring his astonished thanks, he knew by its weight that it was not gold.

"You have made a mistake, my friends," he cried. "This bar is not what you think it, though I own that most men would be deceived."

Greatly surprised, the old woman took it from him, and polished it with her apron in order to show him how brightly it gleamed. As she did so, an inscription appeared, which neither she nor her husband had noticed before. Both listened with great interest as the stranger read it out for them.

"It is less a matter of actual want," it ran, "than the fear of what the morrow will bring, which causes the unhappiness of the poor. Then tread the path of life

with courage, for it is clear that at last you will reach the end of your journey."

When the stranger paused there was a dead silence, for the old man and woman were thinking many things, and words do not come quickly when one is deeply moved. At last John offered the stranger a tremulous apology for the disappointment he must now be suffering through their innocent mistake.

"On the contrary," he replied warmly, "the lesson that bar has taught me is worth far more than any money that you could give me. I shall make a new start in life, and, remembering that we fail through fear, will henceforth bear myself as a brave man should."

So saying, he bade them adieu, and passed out into the fragrant twilight.

One of twenty-three stories in *Folk Tales from Many Lands*, a copiously illustrated volume by Lilian Gask; reprinted by permission of the T. Y. Crowell Company, New York.



THE BARGAIN SHOP

By Cynthia Asquith

ONCE upon a time there lived a man called Anselm, who used several times an hour to stamp his foot and cry out: "I *must* be rich! I *must* be rich!" He was married to the most beautiful woman he had even seen, and, since he had enough to eat and a weatherproof house, and had neither aches nor pains, he should have been happy for 365 days in each year. But his unceasing longing for great wealth spoilt everything, and even on fine days he went about looking as discontented as though he were hungry.

As for his wife, Jasmine, she had long, red-gold hair and great green eyes set wide apart in her flower-

like face, and she possessed a mirror in which she could see her shimmering loveliness. So she ought to have been very happy and very grateful. She was so beautiful that when she walked abroad, men would lean far out of their windows to watch her pass and then wonder why their own wives and daughters should look so much like suet puddings.

But, though you will scarcely believe it, Jasmine was quite as discontented as her husband, and pouted and sighed through the days.

For she, too, was consumed by this perpetual craving for riches. Whether she had caught this uncomfortable sort of illness from her husband, or whether she had given it to him, I do not know, but there they were both wasting their youth, their beauty, and their love for one another, in foolish, petulant longing.

Whenever Jasmine saw other women clad in rich raiment and adorned with jewels, envy would blight her loveliness as frost blights a flower.

"Of what use is my beauty if I cannot adorn it?" she cried. "I *must* have pearls—ropes of pearls, crowns of glittering diamonds, emeralds, rubies, and sapphires!"

"Yes," said Anselm, "and I must have a hundred horses, a thousand slaves, and fountains that spout forth wines!"

One day, as Jasmine walked sadly through a deep, dark forest she suddenly saw a very strange looking house moving slowly toward her. The roof of the house was most beautifully thatched with brightly colored feathers, and across its face in rainbow letters ran the queer inscription:

THE BARGAIN HOUSE

Money for Sale.

Enquire Within

"Money for sale?" read the wondering Jasmine. "What can this mean? Some foolish jest, no doubt."

Three times the house sped round her; then it quivered and stood still. She stared at the glass door that held a myriad reflection of herself. As though her gaze had power to push, it slowly opened. She now saw into a vast hall, and heard a gentle but compelling voice say: "Come in." Trembling, Jasmine walked through the door. The light was dim and flickering as though from a fire, but no fireplace could be seen. Across the whole length of the hall ran a counter, such as you see in large shops, and behind this counter there rose up a wall made of rows of boxes piled high the one upon the other, and on these boxes were rainbow letters and figures. Between the boxes and the counter there stood a tall, sweetly smiling woman, whose face, though unrecognizable, seemed somehow familiar to Jasmine.

"I was expecting you, beautiful Jasmine," spoke the stranger in a voice that was soft but decided, like the fall of snow. "You would buy money, would you not?"

"Can one buy money," faltered Jasmine, "save *with* money, and, alas! I have none."

"Though you were penniless, yet from me you could purchase boundless wealth," replied the stranger. "Behold, a purse," she continued, holding up a red-tasseled bag, "which, spend as you may, will always contain one thousand golden guineas. This purse is yours if in exchange you will give me one part of yourself."

"A part of myself?" gasped the astonished Jasmine. "What would you have? My hair?"

"No," smiled the woman. "Lovely as are your tresses, in time they would grow again, and no one may own unlimited wealth and pay no price therefor. Your

beauty shall remain untouched. It is your sense of humor that I require."

"My sense of humor?" laughed Jasmine. "Is that all? Just that part of me which makes me laugh? Humor? What was it my mother used to call humor? I remember—she said it was man's consolation sent to him by God in sign of peace. God's rainbow in our minds. But with boundless wealth what need of consolation shall I have? Besides, I have often been told I had but little sense of humor. The more gladly will I give it to you. The purse, I pray," and Jasmine held out both her trembling hands.

"Stay a while," said the solemn, smiling woman. "I must warn you of two conditions. First, I would have you know, the money this purse yields can be spent only upon yourself. Would you still have it?"

"Yes! Yes! Yes!" clamored Jasmine.

"I must also tell you that should you ever repent of your bargain and wish to buy back the precious sense you sell, it will, alas, not be in my power to help you. I can never buy back from the person to whom I have sold. The only chance of recovering your sense of humor is, that another customer, unasked by you, should buy it back with a similar purse, and I warn you that it may be hard to find anyone willing to give up boundless wealth for the sake of your laughter."

"What matter?" exclaimed Jasmine. "Never, never shall I wish to return my purse."

"You are determined?" asked the strange saleswoman.

"Yes, yes, yes!"

"Hold out your arms, then."

Eagerly Jasmine stretched out her arms.

The smiling woman touched her on both her funny-bones, drew forth her sense of humor, laid it away

in a box, on which she wrote Jasmine's name, and the date, and then placed it on a shelf between two other boxes.

"Now it is mine, until redeemed by the return of a purse, fellow to this that I give thee," said the woman, handing the tasseled red bag to Jasmine. "And while it is in my careful keeping, this despised sense of yours will grow and grow. Farewell, Jasmine. Leave me now and go forth into a bleak world."

Clasping the marvelous purse to her heart, Jasmine fled from the house and hastened through the deep, dark forest till she reached the city. At once she went to the great jewel merchant's, against whose windows she had often pressed her face in wistful longing.

"I want the biggest pearl necklace you have got," she cried, bursting breathlessly into the gorgeous show-room.

"I'm afraid goods of such value can only be supplied in exchange for ready money," said the merchant with an uncivil smile.

"How much?" asked Jasmine.

"Seven thousand guineas."

Jasmine opened the purse and holding it upside down, shook it. Glittering guineas poured out in a golden stream, but the purse remained just as full as before.

As the clinking coins bounded and rolled, the merchant's eyes grew rounder and rounder, and he had to shout for six small black slaves to come to help him count the money, now lying scattered all over the shop. With the lowest bow he had ever bowed he handed the long rope of glistening pearls to Jasmine. Feverishly she clasped them round her throat, where they scarcely showed against the whiteness of her skin. They reached down to her knees.

"Now some emerald earrings, a crown of diamonds, ten ruby bracelets for each arm, and all the opals you possess!" ordered Jasmine, scattering guineas as she spoke, and putting on all the jewels as fast as they were produced.

At last she went away, hung with jewels as a Christmas tree is hung with ornaments. Proud as a peacock she strutted through the streets, and everyone laughed at the absurd sight of so many gaudy ornaments crowded on one ordinary-sized woman. She heard titters and wondered what might be the cause of the laughter.

She now went to the grandest Fashion House in the city, ordered one thousand costly garments, and came out wearing the richest raiment she had found in stock. Next she bought a most magnificent coach, made of mother o' pearl, with sixteen piebald horses to draw it; and then she engaged an enormous coachman with a face gilt to match his golden livery.

On her way home she stopped at seven merchants' to buy all manner of rare and costly foods, and before long the great coach was crammed with dainties. In it were piled every fruit and vegetable that happened to be then out of season, bottles of wonderful wine, jars of caviar, pots of roseleaf jam, tiny birds in aspic, and sugar plums of every color. Last of all—because it looked so grand and expensive—she bought an immense wedding cake, sixteen stories high. The confectioners laughed. They seemed to think it funny that she should buy the wedding cake. She wondered why they were amused.

When Anselm saw his wife stagger into the room, swaying beneath the weight of so many gaudy jewels, thinking them to be all sham and worn in jest, he burst into a great roar of laughter.

Annoyed at his merriment, Jasmine told him breath-

lessly of the marvelous purse. Her husband laughed and laughed, partly at her story, partly at her absurd appearance. He laughed until he got hiccoughs.

"Oh, how funny! How funny! What has come over you?" he cried, rolling on the floor.

"This is no jest, Anselm, I swear; it is the solemn truth. Just look inside and you will see all the golden coins.

Incredulously Anselm peered into the bulging purse. He rubbed his eyes. Slowly his unbelief gave way to amazed joy.

"Praise be to God!" he cried at last. "We're rich, rich, rich beyond the dreams of man. Give it to me that I may go and buy gorgeous apparel, fine horses, and rarest wines." Feverishly he snatched the purse from his wife's hand.

"What's this?" he cried. "I knew it was some trickery. Your precious purse is as empty as an egg that has been eaten." And in truth, the tasseled bag now dangled from his hand flat and light as a leaf.

"Oh!" screamed Jasmine, in dismay, "give it back to me!" No sooner had she touched the purse than once more it became rounded and heavy with the weight of a thousand guineas.

"Praise be to God!" she sighed. "I remember now. The woman from whom I bought it warned me that the guineas were only for my own use."

"Tut, tut, that's very troublesome," said Anselm ruefully. "But what matter? You will be able to buy gifts for me. It will come to the same thing. But, wife, what mean you when you say you *bought* the purse? With what can one buy money?"

Jasmine told him of the weird house, the mysterious saleswoman, and the strange bargain she had driven.

"Your sense of humor?" cried Anselm. "*Your*

sense of humor! Well, she didn't get much for her money, did she? Ha! ha! ha!"

With grave eyes Jasmine stared at her husband, offended at his display of merriment.

Then she said: "You little guess what a banquet I have prepared for you. Come now and I will show you how I have ransacked the city for its choicest dainties. Let us now feast." Together they entered the dining hall and at sight of the gorgeous banquet spread before them Anselm smacked his lips and promised himself great delight.

But bitter disappointment awaited him. For no sooner did he touch the iced grapefruit with which he intended to begin his feast, than, behold, it shriveled in his hand, and became an empty rind. With an oath he stretched out his hand to grasp a goblet of purple wine. It broke in his hand, and of the rich vintage nothing remained but a stain on the damask tablecloth.

"Alas!" cried Jasmine. "It seems that with the magic gold I may buy nothing for your use!"

In truth, everything that poor Anselm touched, before it reached his eager lips, disappeared like a bubble that has burst. In nothing that had been purchased with the magic gold could he share. For him, all the rich viands were spread in vain, and finally, he was obliged to fall back on their accustomed fare of bread and cheese and last Friday's mutton.

"'Tis funny to watch one's wife quaffing the wines one dreams of and to be on prison fare oneself," laughed Anselm, trying to make the best of things.

"Funny?" asked the wife. "Why is it funny? I think it is very sad. These humming birds and this sparkling juice of the grape are most delicious."

To keep up his spirits Anselm, who was famed for his wit, cracked many jokes, but no smile ever lifted

the corners of Jasmine's perfect mouth; no twinkle appeared in the depth of her great green eyes. Discouraged at last, Anselm fell into silent sulks, while his wife continued to eat and drink, until a stitch came in both her sides.

Days passed. Every evening, Jasmine, clad in new raiment and gorgeous jewels, regaled herself with rich dainties.

"Alas, husband!" she cried one night, "I have no pleasure in feasting that you cannot share."

"In truth, this is no life!" angrily exclaimed Anselm. "To sit at a banquet one may not taste with a wife who cannot see one's jokes. I can bear it no longer. Why should not I seek this strange woman and make the same bargain? If husband and wife may not share their jokes, they must at least share their dinner. Tell me quickly where I may find this 'Bargain House.'"

Jasmine told her husband the way through the deep, dark forest, and early the next morning he set forth in search of the mysterious building. An hour's walking brought him within sight of just such a house as his wife had described. It moved nearer, sped three times around him and then stood still. As he stared at it, the door slowly opened, the gentle, commanding voice bade him enter, and there stood the tall, smiling woman whom his wife had described.

"Good morning, Anselm," she said, in her voice that was soft like the fall of snow. "Would you have a purse that shall always bear a thousand guineas?"

"Indeed I would!" cried Anselm. "Have you one for me?"

"Yes, if you consent to my terms."

"What is it that you want? My sense of humor? Of what use is it to me now? I will gladly part with it."

"No," said the woman. "'Tis not your sense of humor I require of you, it is your sense of beauty."

"Take what you will from me," cried Anselm. "I care not so I have one of those wondrous purses."

"Listen first, Anselm," said the woman, and solemnly, as she had warned Jasmine, so she warned him that the magic money could be spent on none save himself, and that the sense he sold could be bought back only by the owner of such another purse.

"Remember, you can never reclaim it yourself," she repeated.

"I care not! I care not!" exclaimed Anselm. "Quick, the purse!"

"Come hither," said the woman, "and close your eyes." Gently she touched him on both eyelids, and drew forth his sense of beauty. Then she handed him a red-tasseled bag exactly like Jasmine's, and as heavy with golden guineas.

"Now farewell, Anselm. Go forth into a bleak world."

Wild with joy and excitement, Anselm dashed from the Bargain House and hastened through the deep, dark forest to that part of the city where dwelt the grandest merchants. Here he bought gorgeous apparel, costly wines, and magnificent horses. Astride the finest of the horses, a gleaming chestnut, said to be the swiftest steed alive, he then rode home through the forest. As he went, he met an old man clad in wretched rags, who looked very hungry and tired. Feeling pleased with life Anselm plunged his hand into the magic purse, and, drawing forth a golden guinea, flung it at the poor man, who joyfully stooped to pick it up. But no sooner had his hand touched the coin than it vanished. Anselm remembered the woman's warning.

"Sorry, my good fellow," he said, shamefacedly handing the beggar two coppers—all that he could find in his old purse.

"Thanks, noble master. Now I can buy bread for my supper. I never thought to eat to-night."

"For one who sups on dry bread you look strangely cheerful," said Anselm. "At what can you rejoice?"

"'Tis the beauty of the sunset, master. It seems to warm my heart. Never have I seen one like it in glory. Who could look and not be comforted?"

And, in truth, a radiant smile lit up the old man's suffering face as he gazed on the flaming splendors of the western sky. Anselm turned and looked where the beggar pointed, but he could see nothing that seemed worth the turning of the head, and with a shrug of the shoulders he rode home.

Now Jasmine, rejoicing that Anselm would share her feasting, arrayed herself that she might look her fairest for their banquet. She brushed her red-gold hair until it shone, and gazed at herself in the mirror until her beauty glowed. Then she attired herself in a dress of dragon-flies' wings, covered all over with hearts made of tiny little diamonds like dewdrops.

"Never, never have I looked so fair. When Anselm sees me he will love me more than ever. How joyfully we shall feast together, and how glad am I that he will no longer want me to laugh at the things he says! I shall love him far more without his sense of humor."

Her heart beat as she heard footsteps hastening up the stairs. Radiant with excitement in burst Anselm. "I'm rich!" he cried. "Rich! rich! Rejoice with me, Jasmine."

Gray disappointment crushed into Jasmine's heart,

for not one word did her husband say of her especial beauty or her wonderful dress.

"There's nothing like wealth!" he cried. "How did we ever endure our poverty? And fancy, I met a beggar man, who said he was cheerful because he looked at the sunset! Ha! ha! ha!"

"Why do you laugh, Anselm? Have you then not sold your sense of humor? How came you then by that purse?"

"No. I may still laugh. I have but parted with my sense of beauty."

"Your sense of beauty?" echoed Jasmine, icy fear entering her heart. "Is that why your eyes no longer seek my face?"

"Why ever do you look so doleful?" laughed Anselm. "Let us hasten down and feast. My lips thirst for the wines I have bought."

Trembling, Jasmine pleaded: "Look on my face, husband, the face you have so often called your glory. What think you of my face to-night?"

"Your face? Let me look. It seems all right: two eyes, one nose, one mouth. Yes, it seems just as other faces are."

It was with a sad heart poor Jasmine sat at the feast that night. Loving her husband, she rejoiced to see him revel, but that he should no longer gaze at her with admiration which had been her delight was pain past bearing. Anselm enjoyed his feasting, but the wine made jokes rise in his mind, to flutter from his lips, and it vexed him that no smile ever widened his wife's mouth, set for ever in still solemnity.

Days, weeks, months passed. Anselm and Jasmine now lived in a gorgeous palace. They were clad in the finest raiment and they feasted like emperors, but in their hearts all was becoming as dust and ashes.

"Ah me!" sighed Jasmine. "I know now why it was that I longed for wealth. It was that I might add to my beauty and see even more admiration in my beloved's eyes. Of what use to me are my gorgeous gowns, my jewels, my flowerlike face, since Anselm no longer delights to see me?"

And for Anselm the pleasures of feasting and luxurious living soon palled. His wife could not laugh at his jokes, and in the wide world there was nothing for him to admire. Neither sunsets, nor courage, nor self-sacrifice. He could see no beauty in any face, thought, or action. Lost to him were the delights of poetry and all the loveliness of nature.

"What is there in life," he cried, "but feasting and laughter? If only Jasmine could join with me in mocking at the absurdities of man!"

Desperately he strove to restore laughter to his mirthless wife. He engaged a thousand jesters and promised a fortune to him who should make her laugh. Everything human beings consider funny was shown to her. Orange peel was plentifully scattered outside the palace windows, and aged men encouraged to walk past, that they might step on the orange peel and fall. Then, by means of huge bellows purposely placed, their hats were blown from off their heads, in the hope that Jasmine would smile to see the poor fellows vainly chasing their own headgear. But all in vain. Nothing amused Jasmine, neither physical misfortune nor the finest wit. Her mouth remained set. Daily Anselm laughed louder and longer, but into his laughter an ugly bitterness had come. It was now the laughter of mockery, no longer softened by admiration.

During that summer a child was born to Jasmine. For years she had longed for a baby, but now that the funny little creature squirmed in her arms, yawning,

and making faces, she thought it merely ugly and turned from it in disgust.

A few months later the coachman's wife gave birth to a baby, and Jasmine went to visit her. She found her by the fire, nursing a red, hairless, wrinkled daughter that seemed to Jasmine the ugliest morsel in all the world. In speechless horror she stared at it. Opening wide its shapeless mouth, the baby stretched its tiny arms and gave a great yawn. With a joyful laugh, the mother clutched it to her heart. "Oh, you darling, darling!" she cried. "Could anyone not love anything so *funny*?"

"Is Love then born of Laughter?" cried poor Jasmine, and, full of bitter envy, she rushed from the room.

That same year a terrible war was waged and thousands of soldiers went forth to die. One day, Jasmine gazed out of the window. Brave music was playing, and with colors flying, a gallant host of youths marched past, their weeping mothers and sweethearts waving farewell.

"A disgusting sight, is it not?" said Anselm. "All these boys striding off to be killed simply because their foolish kings have quarreled!"

"Yes," replied Jasmine, her eyes full of tears. "But beautiful, too."

"Beautiful?" jeered her husband with a harsh, discordant laugh. "You fool! What beauty can there be in senseless sacrifice?" And, as now often happened, these two fell into loud and bitter wrangling.

Thus daily life became more and more unbearable to Anselm and Jasmine. In spite of all their wealth, boredom pressed heavily upon them. Since she could not laugh, and he could not admire, to both the world seemed full of senseless suffering.

"I can no longer bear this life," said Jasmine one day. "Of what use is the beauty to which Anselm is blind?" I will seek the bargain house and buy back the sense he sold. He will still have his purse with which to buy the luxuries he loves." And forth she went into the deep, dark forest.

An hour later, Anselm exclaimed:

"I can no longer bear this life. I will buy back Jasmine's humor that at least we may together mock at this senseless life. She will still have her purse to buy the fineries she loves." And forth he went into the deep, dark forest.

That evening Jasmine returned without her magic purse, rejoicing that her husband would once more delight in her beauty. She went to say good-night to her little son, who lay in his cot, struggling to draw his tiny toes up into his mouth. The window was open. Suddenly he stretched forth his arms toward the shining moon. It looked so good to suck; he longed to grasp it. He struggled and bubbled and clutched, his crinkled face growing crimson with effort. How funny he looked! Suddenly, Jasmine found herself laughing—laughing—laughing until her whole body shook, and happy peals broke through her astonished lips. "Oh, you darling, darling little joke," she cried, joyfully kissing her child.

At that moment in rushed Anselm, and stood transfixed at the dazzling beauty of his wife.

"Jasmine, Jasmine," he cried, "what has happened. Why are you so dazzlingly beautiful?"

"Because I have no longer a magic purse. I have bought you back your sense, husband."

"You too?" cried Anselm; "and I have bought back your laughter."

"Then we are both poor! Oh, how funny!" cried



AND FORTH SHE WENT INTO THE DEEP DARK FOREST

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Jasmine, her laughter growing louder and louder as they fell into one another's arms.

Thus Anselm and Jasmine parted with their magic purses, and had to work for their daily bread, but they lived happily ever afterwards in a world that was blessedly beautiful and blessedly funny.

From *The Flying Carpet*, a volume containing stories from distinguished modern British writers, edited by the author of this story, Cynthia Asquith; copyright 1925 by Charles Scribner's Sons, and reprinted by permission.



THE BEGGAR'S CHRISTMAS FEAST

By Cornelia Meigs

"SURELY," the beggar was thinking as he walked down the broad highway that skirted the forest, "on so golden and glorious a day as this all the world must be happy and at peace."

The trees along the roadside seemed, indeed, to be leaved with gold, while the underbrush and bushes were ablaze with their red and orange berries, and all the hedgerows were lined with gay-colored autumn flowers. Even the little brook by the roadside, filled to the brim by the recent rains, carried the scarlet and yellow leaves sailing along over its little falls and rapids, while here and there a quiet pool reflected the glowing blue of the cloudless sky. So it was that the good beggar repeated as he limped along:

"All the world must be happy and at peace on a day like this."

Not long after, however, he saw two travelers pass each other at the turn of the road, and noticed that here, at least, was a pair whose good will was not so great as it should be. One was a tall, thin, grim-faced man riding on a great horse and with a long sword hanging at his side. The other was shorter and so fat that an easy-moving white mule was evidently the only beast that he could ride with comfort. Each was

followed by a number of armed servants, showing that both were men of high degree. As the two little companies came together upon the road, the tall man turned his head away, and gazed into the forest with a stern and angry look, while the other fixed his eyes upon the ground before him and hummed a little tune, so that, although evidently they knew each other, it was plain that they were determined to show no friendship. The servants also passed with frowning faces, and more than one with a hand upon his sword, as though it would take little to change the silent hatred into open fighting. And indeed, one bore a scar upon his cheek, another had a bandaged head and a third carried his arm in a sling, as though blows had been exchanged and not so long ago.

"Heigho!" said the beggar, whom no one had noticed as he stood beside the road, "this is not, after all, so peaceful a world as I had thought."

As he walked on, following the tall man's troop of servants, he came to a little town, built in the green hollow between two hills. Upon the slopes on either side were two great dwellings, with wide, dark gateways and high, frowning towers, that seemed to glower at one another across the valley. The tall man and his companions rode in at the gates of one, while the scowling glances cast at the castle on the opposite hill showed that it must be the home of their enemy.

Upon asking questions at the village inn, the beggar found out more about this unfriendly two. The fat man, he heard, dwelt on the right-hand side of the town and was Lord Hubert of Hanstadt, while the other was the great Count Ferdinand of Rassbach. Years ago they had been close friends, but had fallen out, no man knew why, and had become enemies; so that blood had

been shed and heads broken more than once, when they and their servants came together in the town.

"Have they neither wives nor children to help bring this affair to an end?" the beggar had asked.

Lord Hubert, it seemed, had a little daughter, Francesca, whose mother was dead, while Count Ferdinand, who was unmarried, was bringing up his nephew Rudolph to be his heir.

The two children were much the same age and had more than once wandered away from their great gloomy homes, dull places enough for a boy and a girl to seek amusement in, and had been found playing together at the edge of the forest.

"By their means the quarrel may some day be healed," said the landlord of the inn, "when the two lords shall have grown old and died."

"It may be mended sooner than that," said the beggar, as he rose from the three-legged stool upon which he had been sitting by the door of the inn kitchen. The landlord's wife urged him to stay longer, but he said that he had that which called him away, bade the company farewell, and limped off down the street.

Late that afternoon, as Lord Hubert came leisurely homeward upon his white mule, somewhat wearied by his long day's ride, which was indeed a hardship for so fat a man, he met Count Ferdinand once more, who, as luck would have it, was setting forth again upon some errand. There, where the village and forest came together, under a great oak tree whose leaves of red and brown came drifting down upon the three heads bent so close together, sat the beggar, with little Francesca upon one side of him and the boy Rudolph upon the other, so absorbed in the story the man was telling that they did not hear the approaching footsteps.

"And so—" the beggar was saying, "the brave prince drew his sword——"

"What means this?" cried Lord Hubert's great stern voice so suddenly that the tale came to an end and the children never learned what happened to the prince.



"Have I not told you often enough, Francesca, that you are never to speak to that brat from the castle of Rassbach, nor have any dealings with him?"

"And you, Rudolph," said Count Ferdinand, in the low, bitter tone he used when he was angry, "are you

not being trained for something better than spending your time with the heiress of all that is evil? Let go her hand at once, and get you gone from here. As for you," he went on to the beggar, "I will have my men whip you out of the village for bringing these children together. In this, I think even my enemy, coward as he is, will join me. Come, my men, lay your staves upon this fellow's ragged shoulders."

Strange to say, no one stirred to obey his order, for there was something in the stranger's fierce blue eyes that held them all in their places.

"I think," said the beggar, at last, "that there have been already blows enough struck in this quarrel, and my advice to you is to stay your hands before any greater evils come upon you."

So saying, he turned and trudged away into the forest, no one daring to follow him.

Lord Hubert rode slowly up to his castle gate, muttering to himself angry words against his enemy who had called him a coward, while Count Ferdinand, forgetting his errand, returned silently to his own dwelling, his heart fairly bursting with his bitter hatred. Not a word did he say until, as he was entering the great gateway, a thought struck him. He turned, looked about him and said:

"Where is Rudolph?"

Where indeed? So intent had all of them been upon the harsh words that were being exchanged, not one had noticed what had become of the children. At almost the same moment, Lord Hubert was asking his servants where was their little mistress, the Lady Francesca, and none could tell him. Before long men from both households were scattered in all directions, seeking the lost boy and girl, but although they searched all night and all the next day no traces of the

children could they find. That evening the golden autumn weather broke; sharp north winds tore the leaves from the trees and laid low the flowers, and a fierce storm of rain and snow turned the season suddenly to winter. For many days the search went on, but half-heartedly now, for there seemed little hope of finding Francesca and Rudolph still alive, after all this time. In the heart of each of the two great enemies was a lurking suspicion that the other knew something of where the missing ones were hidden, so the hatred became ever deeper and fiercer, as weeks went by and neither boy nor girl was found.

There came a night, when the snow was drifting high about the walls, the wind was whistling shrilly through the gateway and roaring down the chimneys, that Count Ferdinand sat alone before a huge blazing fire in his castle hall. He was trying, vainly, not to think of his little nephew, Rudolph, who might at this moment be wandering somewhere in the driving snow-storm, but to turn his thoughts upon his enemy, Lord Hubert, and his great hatred. Yet, try as he would, he could not drive from his heart the picture of the lost children, shivering and crying and seeking through the darkness to find their home.

"It is of no use," he said aloud, although there was no one to hear him save his own unhappy heart. "It is of no use to think more of them, for surely they were both dead long ago."

Nevertheless so intense did these pictures become, that he almost felt he could hear the children's cries in the wailing of the wind, and, at last, could bear it no longer. He heaved a long sigh, arose from his big carved chair by the fire, buckled on his sword, wrapped himself in his great cloak and slipped out into the night.

The wind was so fierce that he could scarcely stand against it, the snow was falling thickly and was already knee-deep, yet he struggled forward, down the hill, past the village and into the forest. Here the way was easier, for he was sheltered by the trees and there was less snow, so that he walked steadily onward, peering this way and that into the darkness, making his way through snow-laden thickets and over hidden rocks, and ever and anon calling with all his strength:

"Rudolph, Rudolph!"

A vain quest it was, as he well knew, one to which his own uneasy heart had driven him, since somehow he felt less miserable than when sitting at home before the fire. As he went on, benumbed with cold, nearly blinded with the wind and snow in his face, his heart, somehow, grew lighter, as though there were, after all, a hope of finding the children who had been lost so long. And at last when he had called for perhaps the hundredth time, with a voice grown hoarse from vain shouting, he heard, faint and far away, an answering cry. He forgot his weariness and cold, and hurried forward with new hope, calling again and again, and getting ever louder and louder answers, until he could see footprints in the snow before him and could see, at the edge of a clearing, a dark figure lying upon the ground. It was too large to be a boy like Rudolph; it was as large as—could it be?—it was—his enemy Lord Hubert.

"How came you here?" cried the Count, shaking the fallen man by the shoulder, in his excitement.

"In perhaps the same way, and for the same reason, that you yourself have come hither," answered Lord Hubert. "When I heard the cold wind howling and thought of my little daughter wandering abroad in the snow, as perhaps she is, I fell to hating my bright fire

and warm bed, and came forth to ease my lonely heart, and with a faint hope that I might find her."

"Did you not know that any such quest was bound to be in vain?" said Count Ferdinand.

"And did you not know it also?" responded the other. "Yet here are both of us in the same plight, lost in the snow and dark, for I know not in which direction lies the village, nor, as I think, do you. There is but one difference, that you are not yet worn out with cold and long wandering. I traveled as far as I could, and when I fell was too weak to arise, so had decided that I must lie here until I died. I had stumbled in my haste, for just before I fell I had seen a dim light moving about, far ahead of me among the trees. If you will raise me for a moment in your arms, I will point out to you the direction from which it came, that you may follow it and come to safety or perhaps even find our children. As for me, all is now at an end."

"No, no," cried Count Ferdinand, "you shall go on with me, though I carry you upon my shoulders."

He lifted the fallen man, who, once upon his feet, could walk forward with his companion's help.

"See," he cried, almost at once, "there is the same faint spark again, and this time not so far away. This is a part of the forest where men do not ordinarily come, particularly on such a night as this, so that it must mean something unusual, have something to do, perhaps, with our lost children."

With all their failing strength they followed the dancing light which wound in and out, up and down, leading them for so long that it seemed at last they could pursue it no farther. Lord Hubert, being the weaker of the two, stumbled and staggered, hung more and more heavily on his companion's arm and finally stood still.

"Leave me here," he said, "and do you go on. I am convinced that light will lead to the finding of the children, and if we stop to rest, it may be we will lose sight of it. So go on, and leave me behind."

"But you will perish here in the snow," said Count Ferdinand.

"It matters not," said the other, "you and I have sought each other's lives before this in the bitterness of our quarrel, so why should you care if I come to my death here in the forest. And what care I, for that matter, if only my daughter can be saved."

Count Ferdinand was a man of few words, and did not waste any now. He put his arm about his failing comrade and half dragged, half carried him on. The light seemed now to move more slowly across the snow, so that they felt they were coming nearer. At last, Lord Hubert gave a feeble shout of joy.

"I see now what it is," he cried; "no will-o'-the-wisp as I had begun to fear, but a ragged fellow in a red cloak carrying a torch, and now he is going in at the door of a tiny hut, and the light shines out again from the window. Look, we are actually on a path through the snow that leads us thither."

They pressed on as quickly as their aching limbs would let them, and before long were themselves knocking at the door of the little cottage. It was opened at once and the beggar stood before them.

"Come in," he cried, "and welcome to you both, for we have been looking for you these many days past. It is, however, best of all that you have chosen this special night to come here together, seeking your lost children."

"Why should this night be best?" said Lord Hubert, too bewildered to ask further questions.

"Have your hearts grown so hard," said the beggar, "and your lives so bare that you do not remember that this is Christmas Eve? No wonder your children ran away from you!"

The two enemies looked at each other. It was true that Christmas had long been forgotten in their great, grim houses, so busy had they both been in hating one another. They passed silently through the open door, which the beggar closed behind them, shutting out the dark, and the cold and the howling storm.

Within, a great fire was crackling on the hearth, a woman sat spinning at one side of it, while a rough-clad but gentle-faced man sat at the other. Before the blaze, stretched upon the wolfskin mat, were two shock-headed little peasants and with them, laughing and tumbling about like a pair of merry-hearted kittens, were their own lost children.

Set between the windows at the end of the room was another object, strange indeed to their unaccustomed eyes. A little tree, shining with golden stars and gay ornaments, and lighted with tiny candles, stood before them, and, since it was a Christmas tree of the beggar's bringing, it was not like any other of the many that filled the cottages of the world that night. The stars winked and twinkled as though they had been gathered from the sky itself, the lights burned with a dozen different colors, the ornaments glittered as though they were rubies and emeralds that hung upon the boughs.

"What means all this?" shouted Lord Hubert, at last, in his great voice, so that the children jumped up in terror and the woman's face turned pale.

Little Rudolph, however, catching sight of his uncle, who stood silent by the door, pushed Francesca behind him and cried defiantly—

"You shall never take us back, even if you have found us."

"No," added the girl, her eyes flashing, "for the beggar will not let you."

"Let us hear first," said the count, quietly, "how you came here, before we begin quarreling again."

"It was that ragged man in the red cloak who brought us hither," explained Francesca, who was quicker of speech than the boy; "we ran away while you were talking under the oak tree, and lost ourselves in the wood. The beggar found us there, late in the night, and bade us each take one of his hands, and thus he led us through the wind and the rain, far into the forest until we came here to the charcoal burner's house and here we stayed."

"And we like it here," put in Rudolph, "since there are no great empty rooms, or harsh voices, or angry faces, but love and peace and happiness, so here we mean to stay forever."

"The beggar told us," said the charcoal burner's wife, speaking now for the first time, "that some day Lord Hubert and Count Ferdinand would come hand in hand, in friendship, through the snow to find their children. After I had heard the boy and girl tell of the fierce hatred that lay between these two lords, I felt that such a thing could never happen, and that the children, whom we have grown to love as our own, would stay with us always."

"The beggar said further," added the charcoal burner, "that perhaps Christmas Eve would be the time of your coming, so he helped the children deck their tree, for he said this night should be an especial festival of peace and good will."

"He was right," said Count Ferdinand; "on our way hither on this Christmas Eve we have made peace to-

gether and come to the end of the long quarrel that has brought so much evil upon us. Do not fear," he said to the children, "that if you come back with us, there will be any lack of love and happiness in those homes from which you have run away. Now where is this fellow who has shown himself to be so wise a man? It is fitting that he should be properly rewarded. Is it not so, friend Hubert?"

"It is indeed," said the lord, and looked about him with a puzzled air. "But where can he be?"

"He slipped out as you came in," said the woman, "but I think, if you look through the window, you will see him out yonder, decking another Christmas tree in his own fashion."

There they saw him, as they crowded about the window that looked out upon the forest. He was standing beside the little fir tree that grew before the cottage door, and had lighted a huge crackling fire that threw its red glare far and wide upon the dark trunks. The tree was decorated with twinkling lights as was the one inside, and its candles somehow burned clear and high in spite of the wind. There were berries and nuts and gay-colored bits of this and that hanging among the branches; every sort of thing had been provided that could best tempt the beggar's guests. And these, it seemed, were all at hand, for the green fir boughs were full of twittering snowbirds, with squirrels and chipmunks merrily cracking the nuts, while rabbits came hopping up, to rise high on their haunches and snuff at the carrots and parsnips that hung from the lower branches. A great red fox had slunk out from among the shadows and thrust his long nose into the beggar's pouch, while a gaunt, hungry wolf was pressing against his other side.

"It is truly such a festival of peace and good will as

no man has ever seen before," said Lord Hubert, his great voice strangely hushed. "Here our quarrel ends, through his means, and here the wood animals come together at his call, forgetting that they prey upon one another. He is a wise and wonderful fellow, this beggar, and should have, as you said, a great reward."



Such, however, was not to be. Even as they watched, the beggar gathered his old red cloak about him, turned away from fire and tree, and, with his woodland guests trailing behind him, wolf and rabbit, fox and squirrel, went limping forth over the snow, never looking back. The flames flickered high, but showed only

a line of confused footprints. The man himself had disappeared into the shadowy forest, and was never seen in that country again.

Reprinted by permission, from Cornelia Meigs' *The Kingdom of the Winding Road*, published by The Macmillan Company, New York, 1926; a group of twelve stories, fresh in their inception, and consistent with the fairy-tale spirit.



THE CATTLE THAT CAME

Retold by Constance Smedley Armfield

ONCE upon a time, a young couple went up on a great mountain to build a little home. They had no money at all, and a spade and an axe were their sole possessions, but they knew the world was full of good things for those who have courage and kindness, and they set out bravely to fell the trees and dig the ground until they had cleared a little space for a cottage. They lived on wild berries and nuts until their first crops rose, and by dint of working early and late, they presently had a fine cottage and then a prosperous farm. They exchanged berries for seed, and their crops for clothes and furnishing, until six children had been born to them, each as pretty as a forest flower and as sturdy. By the time Peter, the eldest, was seven, the trees in the orchard were laden with fruit, roses climbed over the roof and the chimney of the cottage, and flowers grew along the garden path; and the farmer and his wife often turned their eyes to the meadows on the mountain and wondered if they would ever have enough to buy cattle to graze thereon.

One fine afternoon in the time of harvest the children were helping their parents gather the cherries and



A YOUNG COUPLE WENT UP ON A MOUNTAIN TO BUILD
A HOUSE



early apples. Suddenly the mother, looking up, saw a great eagle high overhead carrying something, and on gazing closely she perceived the bird held a baby. She gave a loud shriek and called her husband, who rushed out with his spade, waving and calling, but the bird still hovered overhead. Just then, however, the children, hearing their parents' cries, popped their heads out of the trees to see what was happening. Out of the top of the cherry tree, came Peter and John and James; from the apple tree peeped little Rozsa and Pille; and Baby Blue-eyes rolling on the grass, sat up and stared.

On seeing the poor little baby high in the air, the children shrieked with their parents, and frightened at the noise, Baby Blue-eyes lifted her voice in the most ear-piercing wail the family had ever heard. Apparently the eagle had never heard anything like it either, for it rose with a great swoop, dropping the baby to the ground. Fortunately, the farmer's wife held out her apron in time to save it, and then all the family clustered round to behold a most beautiful child, in the finest silken clothes, laughing and crowing and in no way hurt.

As they stood admiring it, who should come out of the forest but an elegant lady, magnificently dressed, with jewels glittering on her outstretched hands. It was plain she was the mother of the little one, and coming up, she thanked them a thousand times for rescuing the child, and begged to know if there was anything they wanted which she could provide. The farmer kept shaking his head, saying they wanted nothing from her, for they had done nothing for her beyond their simple duty to the innocent baby, but little Peter piped out suddenly that they were always wishing they had a cow so that they might have milk for breakfast.

On hearing this the lady said six pairs of cattle should arrive, a pair for every child. "But," she added, "they must always be kept together, and belong to all of you. If you sell them or separate them, your prosperity will vanish. It was by calling together, that you were able to frighten the eagle, even the baby's screams being needed, and it is by living and working together that good will come to you. As long as the cattle graze in your fields your fortune will be secure."

With this the lady departed, and one evening some days after, when the farmer and his wife were resting on the garden bench, what should they see but six magnificent pairs of cattle coming up from the meadows, with the children driving them.

From that day, they enjoyed marvelous prosperity. The farmer and his wife now had absolute confidence that everything they sowed would bear fine harvests. They lost all fear of the future or misfortune, planted boldly, marketed their produce wisely, and by the time the children were grown up, the farmer's estate extended over the mountain, and every child had married and brought his bride or her husband to a snug cottage, near the parents' home. But all ate together in the parents' house, worked together, and shared the produce equally.

Soon each cottage was blessed with children, and a happy circle of little ones carried on the good work of helping in the general good.

But at last the farmer and his wife grew full of years and one day the farmer called his children to his bedside and told them he was leaving for the long journey, and made them promise to continue in loving fellowship and to have all things in common and remember their prosperity depended on keeping the six pairs of

cattle, which had never grown old or feeble, all these years.

For some time after the farmer had passed away, the family remembered his words, and shared the harvests and the land without thought of private profit or possession. Peter, the eldest, looked after the animals, and with his son, attended to the marketing of the extra produce. John saw to the gardens and the fields, with his strapping boys and girls. James and his family cut down the trees, and made the furniture they needed, also the boots and shoes, and further, painted gay flowers on the chairs and chests, and were always around with their tools or paint brush, improving the insides or outsides of the homes when they were not busy at shoemaking. Rozsa and her husband carded and spun and wove the wool from the sheep, and the flax from the field, and with their children, made good strong clothes for every one, on which Rozsa's little girls and boys embroidered pretty patterns and letters so that everyone was gay for Sundays and holidays.

Pille managed the dairy, and made the best butter and cheese ever tasted; her children drove the cows and milked them; and her husband attended to the chickens, the geese, the turkeys, the ducks, and all the other fowl about the place. Baby Blue-eyes married a pastry cook, and the two of them cooked the fine dinners they all enjoyed in the big house; their little ones ran in the woods and found mushrooms and berries and herbs.

Never was there a happier set of people, and of course, all were always ready to lend a hand when anyone wanted help, and glad to teach what they knew, so that in the winter evenings, one might see everyone round the fire having an embroidery lesson, or learning how to make some sweetmeat, or hearing stories

of the market town where Peter went every month on their business; and in the summer all the children would go nutting or picking berries, and all would make the hay or cut the crops together.

There was nothing on earth left for them to desire, and how discontent began to grow up amongst them, like some evil weed, none could say. But grow it certainly did.

It started when Peter began to listen to the other farmers boast of the money each was making and the triumphs they were winning over one another. Some bragged of the fine things they were doing for their children, but Peter noticed that they never rejoiced at hearing of the fine things the other farmers were doing for their children. No, every man seemed bent on getting all he could for himself and his, and Peter was told he was a poor sort of father, to work so hard for other people's children, and give his own no more than he gave to the others.

Then John talked with the neighbors who came to see his crops and his vegetables, and he found they were all boasting of the profits they made from this crop or that, and were especially glad when they made more than another had; and they thought John very foolish to let all the family enjoy the things he raised, without setting apart the best for his own use, and his children's use.

Then James began to get his head turned by the compliments strangers paid the family on the pretty things in their homes; everyone marveled to hear that James had made everything, and several took him aside and said it was absurd such a clever fellow should be at the beck and call of a whole circle of relations and he ought to go to the city for his children's sake, and make a name for himself and a big fortune and give

them a good education and see that they advanced in the world. Even Rozsa and her husband were not left in peace, for when the family sallied out to church or a merry-making, everyone remarked on the quality and beauty of their clothes, and when they heard they were made at home, cried that Rozsa ought to set up a shop and make for all the grand people round about. It was sheer waste to put such clever work into the clothes of her family.

Pille and her husband were approached by men from foreign parts who wanted cargoes for their ships, and thought the casks of cheese and butter would be all the better for a trip across the ocean; and Baby Blue-eyes and her husband received a visit from no other than the steward of the king of the land, saying he had heard of their skill, and desired their services for the state banquets. When Baby Blue-eyes and her husband explained this excellent cooking was just for home use, and the delicious sweetmeats were tasted by no one but the children of the family, and the jellies and delicacies were everyday fare, and at the service of any sick neighbor or anyone else who was hungry, the steward threw up his hands and cried he had never heard of such wicked waste. Such excellence should be reserved for royal banquets.

So one night when they were gathered together, all sitting silent with no more jokes or stories or friendly help, Peter broke out with the news that he was not going to be a fool any longer, but would take his share of the farm and do the best he could for himself; and then the others joined in, repeating the compliments they had received on their cleverness, and everyone saying they were doing too much for the others, more than their fair share, and could do very much better for themselves and their children.

So the next thing was to divide the property; and you may be sure each held a very different opinion from what the others did, about what he or she deserved, and finally they came to the six pairs of cattle, and found they could not divide them up for there were only twelve cattle and there were no less than forty-three members of the family. Besides, they could not forget their father's warning that if the cattle were divided their prosperity would end. So at last Peter proposed that they should all drive the cattle from the pastures, and the one whose cottage they stopped nearest to should have the lot. After much wrangling they agreed to this, and all set out to drive the cattle home. But of course no one would let the cattle stop at anyone else's cottage, and they belabored the poor beasts so unmercifully that at last the cattle threw up their heads, lashed their tails, and broke into a frenzied gallop, right over the mountain top. Up flew the family after them, and found themselves standing on the edge of a great precipice with the poor cattle sinking in the swamp far below.

The moans of the poor creatures rose up to them, and the family at last saw what they had done, and came home, weeping and quarreling, each laying the blame on the other.

Then no one cared to do any work, for all feared that ill-luck would come on everything; and indeed, everything they touched did seem to turn out badly. For the first time in their lives they sat down to heavy bread, and soup with too much salt in it. John forgot to water his young cauliflower plants and found them withered quite away; the butter wouldn't churn and the cheese wouldn't set; and so it went from day to day. The worst effect of all was, that the children no longer played with one another, but threw

stones and mud and said hard words even as their parents did.

No one had divided the lands yet, and no one had the heart to make a move in that direction. But at last one evening when they were round the fire, bemoaning their sad fate, Peter spoke out and said:

"We have all been to blame, every one of us, for we broke our promise to our father in the first place, and then we stopped loving each other. Instead of being grateful for all the good that had been given us, we began to want more than we could use, and for the poor purpose of exulting over our neighbors, and even our own brothers. This punishment is deserved and at least we need not be cowardly enough to grumble at it."

These were the first true words the family had heard for many a day and John was ready enough to agree, and so was James, and finally Rozsa and Pille chimed in with: "Yes, prosperity has gone from us forever but we can still keep our word to our father and go on living together. We ourselves will gladly do our best for everyone again."

"Yes, yes," cried Baby Blue-eyes, "though the poor cattle are gone, I am grateful we are all left. I never wanted to cook for the king's grand guests, and we will see that no more spoilt dishes come to table. At least we can do our best to help and cheer each other." All joined in with this, and that night all embraced on parting and, though all were saddened, once more love and kindness reigned.

From that day the family returned to their own ways, save that each worked with added diligence; and mothers, and fathers too, were quick to see that the little ones lived in friendship with each other and allowed no quarreling to spring up again.

Then, to their great surprise, instead of their prosperity coming to an end, as they expected, everything they did succeeded more and more; never had they had such harvests as they beheld next year; never had the children looked so well and beautiful; never had their homes looked so charming. They asked one another how this could have happened, for the words of the lady and of their father must surely have been true; until Peter suddenly exclaimed, "Why, of course, we did not separate the cattle; we were saved in time, by the poor creatures' fate."

"Yet it was our selfishness that drove them to their doom," said John very soberly. But at that moment what should they hear but a great shout of joy coming nearer and nearer, and rushing to the door of the house, in which they were waiting for the children to come home to dinner, they beheld the six pairs of cattle driven by the children. How the cattle had got out of the swamp and into the meadows none ever knew, but returning from the forest where the little ones had spent the morning gathering berries, the children had beheld the cattle quietly grazing, and had driven them home in joy and triumph, even as their parents had driven them home, long years ago.

From *Wonder Tales of the World* by Constance Smedley Armfield, a collection of seventeen stories elaborating and transfiguring certain of the old folk tales which emphasize ideals of simple living. Reprinted by special arrangement with the copyright owners, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York.



THE FOOLISH YOUNG EMPEROR

Retold by Constance Smedley Armfield

ONCE upon a time there lived a very young emperor. He ascended the throne when he was too young to understand his responsibilities, but his councilors felt all would be well because he had a wise queen-mother to advise him. But thrones have a way of raising their inhabitants out of all sense of proportion, and the young emperor had not reigned long before he began to think that he was the most wonderful person in the world. It is true he was unusually handsome, could dance and sing and write poems as well as he rode or shot with the bow, and had a charming smile. But his younger brother was equally handsome and accomplished, thanks to their mother's training, and he had a virtue in addition: he

was modest. When the emperor began repeating the flattery of his courtiers to his mother instead of consulting her about the affairs of state, her brow grew thoughtful, and when he finally took to bringing her the odes the court poets wrote to him and insisting on reading them all through aloud, yes, for hundreds and hundreds of pages, she perceived something was seriously wrong. So the next time he visited her, he found her with an ode in her hand, and before he could bring forth the morning's tribute to himself, she requested the privilege of reading a poem to him. Naturally he expected further flattery, and settled himself complaisantly to hear it. But what was his surprise when she calmly read the following:

To a Talkative Guest

The town visitor's easy talk flows on in endless stream,
The country host's quiet thoughts ramble timidly on.
I beg you, sir, do not tell me about things at Ch'ang-an
For you entered just when my harp was tuned and lying balanced
on my knees.

"I pray my honorable mother to explain what has that got to do with me?" cried the emperor.

"This is a poem of your brother's," said his mother, "whose poems your majesty doubtless desires to honor. They are being read and loved all through your kingdom, for he sings of the simple people and their joys and sorrows, and they feel he is both their heart and their voice."

But at this the emperor's brow grew even darker, and he started to his feet exclaiming, "My people should listen to one voice alone, and that is the voice of the emperor."

"True, they have little other opportunity," said his mother. "But of late your voice has been occupied with little else than news of your illustrious and august

self. Did not your brother speak for your people, you would be in danger of forgetting their existence."

"There is no room for two emperors in one kingdom," replied the young emperor, with eyes that burned like a wild animal's. "I perceive with whom your sympathies lie."

"They lie with all that is right, wise, and just, as they have ever done," said the queen-mother. "I pray your majesty to allow me to withdraw, as I perceive you have received sufficient food for thought."

"And allow me to offer a maxim in exchange," said the emperor, forgetting all his filial politeness. "He who rides a tiger cannot dismount." Furious was the glance he cast upon his mother, and pale grew the cheeks of the councilors, but the wise old lady bent her head as if her son had offered her a pearl of great price.

"And whither indeed will the tiger carry him?" said she, and made her adieus before the young emperor could say another word.

He returned to his council chamber in a terrible state, and after striding up and down till everyone round grew quite dizzy, he summoned his brother to appear before the whole court.

Beautiful indeed was the emperor's young brother; his voice was as clear as the scholar's harp, and his step as free as the sweep of the jungle-fowl. He entered the great hall as if he brought the spring with him, and hastened to greet his august majesty.

But the young emperor folded his arms and gazed at him darkly with burning eyes. "We hear you are boasting of your genius," said he. "We have called you to prove it, therefore, so that we may honor you if your pretensions are substantial. We command you instantly to make a verse which will prove to everyone assembled that your wit and wisdom deserve reward."

So contemptuous was the emperor's tone, so withering his glance, that the heart of everyone turned cold, for all loved the young brother.

Yet what poet's inspiration could blossom under such harsh winds?

For a moment his brother stood speechless, then his eye sought the end of the great hall, where preparations for the evening's feast were proceeding. He paced from wall to wall four times, his steps beating out an even measure, then turning to the emperor said, without a moment's hesitation:

Are there not beans in yon boiling pot,
And beanstalks are burning below?
Now why, when they spring from one parent root,
Should they scorch the other so?

A positive sigh of admiration went through the hall, and the young emperor himself could not utter a word of mockery. For one moment the mild eyes of his brother seemed to pierce his heart, then, as he beheld the looks of homage and respect on every side, the emperor's jealousy overcame all else, and rising from his throne, he cried in a harsh voice:

"Excellently said! So quick a wit should be used in our service and the service of our people, to whom we hear you are devoted. Go at once therefore to the field of battle, and fight for us in the forefront of our army. Those who desire to lead shall be given every opportunity of proving their devotion!"

Great was the consternation when the news spread that the gentle young poet had been sent to a position of such danger, but there was no help for it. The emperor's word must be obeyed, and the young brother was sent away to the far corner of the emperor's dominions where the war was raging.

[The emperor did not go near his mother's apartments

for some days, and when at last he approached, although he put on his most formidable air, he could not help a quaking feeling as he entered her respected presence.

But to his and everyone's amazement, the queen-mother received him with the sweetest grace, entertained him with a new sort of comfit and fruits specially grown by her gardener, and said no word whatsoever about his brother's departure. When he was retiring, she requested his acceptance of a little story as a parting gift.

"Once upon a time," said she, "there lived an old ass who happened to cross the path of a hungry tiger.

" 'Aha,' said the tiger, 'here is food for my hunger.'

" 'But I am old and tough,' said the ass. 'Allow me, I beg of you, to conduct you to more tender fare.'

"The tiger accordingly accompanied the ass until they came to a tree on which a nimble young monkey was swinging. But directly they came into sight—'What!' cried the monkey, 'have you only brought me one tiger to-day?' At which the tiger grew so confused that he turned tail, and both ass and monkey escaped."

At the word "tiger," the emperor's face had paled, and when his mother had finished, he looked again just like that dreadful beast.

"I pray my honorable mother to explain her instruction," said he.

"Alas," said his mother, "he who rides a tiger cannot dismount, and so the meaning of stories escapes him."

Then did the foolish and wicked young emperor send messengers to the battlefield, ordering his brother to be placed in even more exposed positions; but the very next day all the bells were ringing and the drums beating through the kingdom. For the news had come

that his young brother had won a most glorious victory and was riding through the land in triumph, hailed by everyone as the emperor's greatest general and the country's savior.

Now was the emperor nearly beside himself, and, refusing to listen to his prime minister or wisest counselors, he issued an edict, banishing his brother to the northern marshes, there to remain on penalty of death and confiscation of all his estates.

It was fully a week before the emperor paid his respects to his mother after this, for the whole country was steeped in gloom as if a famine swept the land. But his reception was as pleasant as before. The queen-mother had discovered a new recipe for honey candy, and her gardener had sent up persimmons as large as peaches. Not a word was said of anything disagreeable, but when he showed signs of departure, the queen-mother again begged leave to present him with a parting gift.

The emperor, put completely off his guard, assented, and she promptly answered:

"This time it is the story of a bunny rabbit who crossed the path of an illustrious tiger. There seemed no possible escape for him, but providence is ever supplying wisdom to its creatures, and the bunny quickly pointed out that it was very small, and would make but one juicy morsel. 'Why not lie down and take your ease?' said the bunny. 'I will hide you behind a pile of leaves and brushwood, and then will drive a procession of tender beasts before your highness. Keep your eyes shut so that they will think you fast asleep until they get close to you.'

"The hungry tiger therefore lay down, greedily thinking of the good things that would now come his way, and the bunny rabbit made a great pile of sticks

and leaves, even as he had said. 'Keep your eyes shut though,' cried the bunny, 'especially when you hear the creatures coming.'

"So the tiger tightly closed his eyes, and not until his whiskers were scorched and his face burned with the flames did he discover himself surrounded with a great ring of fire, while the bunny rabbit was scuttering up the hill, quite out of reach."

"I pray that my venerable mother should not put herself to the trouble of chronicling such foolishness," said the emperor, giving her a direful look, for he knew by now whom the tiger was supposed to symbolize.

"Alas!" said the queen-mother, "I entirely agree with you that the tiger was foolish; does not greed always end in blind self-destruction?" And behold, the little door leading to the private stair into the queen's inmost apartments closed behind the queen-mother; and the emperor returned to his palace in so great a rage he forgot all that a son should remember.

He was now possessed of one thought only, to prove his power; and, to the horror of his kingdom, next day he issued a decree of banishment against his own mother, and moreover took a solemn vow that they should never meet again until they were both underground.

Now was the kingdom plunged into mourning as though an earthquake had happened, and the palace was as silent and dismal as the tomb.

The good looks of the emperor vanished; his voice was hoarse as a young crow's; he had no heart for dancing or riding, but moped in his private chamber night and day. After some months of this unhappy seclusion, word came that an envoy from a distant kingdom had arrived in the city and desired to pay his respects to the emperor. The envoy was accordingly

bidden to a state banquet, the first that had been held since the queen-mother's lamentable departure.

Now all the cooks hastened to pursue their art again, and pies of bearded millet, stews of peppered herbs, salads of minced radishes and southernwood, and dishes of sweet chicken in cheese pressed by men of Ch'u, sent up fragrant odors until even the emperor felt hungry!

But he soon fell into moody silence, and the feast became savorless to all the guests except the honorable envoy. He was an elderly man whose eyes were concealed behind horn spectacles, and whose long and snowy beard indicated he had passed the time when feasts gave him pleasure. Yet the envoy kept helping himself to dish after dish without pausing, until the emperor was roused to notice. Then he perceived that the envoy was placing portions of each serving into separate bowls beside him.

"Is it the custom of your country to make such offering to the gods?" inquired the emperor, with faint curiosity.

"No, your majesty," said the envoy; "but I am keeping these titbits for my mother, so that she may also taste these royal dainties."

"What!" cried the emperor, "you have a mother, an old man like you?"

"It is the joy of my life to preserve her honorable existence," returned the envoy.

"Wretch that I am," said the emperor, "I have dishonored the wisest mother that ever man possessed, and now, by my oath, I can never see her in this life, nor even attend on her honorable remains, for I have sworn by the graves of my ancestors never to look upon her face until we both meet underground."

"Would that I could help your august majesty with



HE FELL INTO MOODY SILENCE



words of wisdom," returned the envoy. "A humble maxim comes to mind: 'When there's a will, there's a way.'"

"There is not a single way by which we could meet upon this earth, now I have sworn so sacred a vow," replied the emperor.

"By two ways, your majesty, you might meet underground, however," said the envoy thoughtfully. "Has it occurred to your august notice, that if a subterranean chamber were made, with two approaches, your majesty's oath could be kept and your majesty's filial duty and affection satisfied?"

Who can describe the joy which animated the emperor's visage at these words! Leaping to his feet, he gave instant commands that workmen should be summoned; and that night the torches shone on a great retinue of masons and carpenters and laborers quarrying deep into the earth.

Soon a magnificent hall was made beneath the palace, and a cavalcade of messengers was sent to desire the queen-mother to return. Now all the councilors were summoned, the courtiers, the scholars, the priests of the temple, every nobleman, and even every noble child, for the emperor desired the whole kingdom to witness his repentance. In the subterranean chamber, a throne of rock crystal had been erected beneath a canopy of jade, and lanterns of pierced marble hung from the ceiling, whose lights were reflected in the porcelain tiles. The emperor himself had donned a mourning robe of white over his other garments, and had issued orders that the court was to do likewise. But when the ebony doors opened, and the familiar figure of the queen-mother was seen behind them, bells and harps broke forth into joyful sounds, and as the queen-mother raised her kneeling son, his white robe

slipped off, as did every other mourning robe in the assembly, and radiant colors rejoiced the eye.

Then, leading his mother to the throne, the emperor again knelt before her and humbly begged her acceptance of a gift he had prepared.

Clapping his hands, he summoned a troop of the most noted singers and harpists of the kingdom, who proceeded to recite every poem his brother had written until all were amazed at the wealth of beauty therein.

"And now," said the emperor, "I have sent in vain for my young brother, and fear he has perished in the savage climate of the marshes; but I have issued a command that his poems shall be sung at every festival henceforth, and that his name shall be honored as highly as my own."

All this time the queen-mother had been sitting on the throne with a wise little smile back of her eyes, and when the emperor had finished, she bowed her head and requested permission to offer one small and insignificant gift for all honors he had been pleased to lavish on her.

"Once upon a time," said the queen-mother, "there lived an old cat who had been unfortunate enough to find a tiger cub among her kittens. She performed her motherly duties to him, however, until the cub grew strong and lusty. One day the young tiger, glorying in his strength, turned on the cat and cried, 'Now I have learned all you have to teach, and you are of no further use, I am going to eat you.' But the cat gave a great spring backward, and lo and behold there she was in the boughs of a tree too high for the tiger to reach! 'Aha!' said the cat, 'I have not taught you *all* my tricks.'"

At this there sounded a great trampling overhead, with the noise of drums and martial trumpets, and

through the ranks of the courtiers advanced the first troops of the army.

All fell to their knees, for the subterranean chamber was entirely surrounded by the troops at whose head the young brother had fought so bravely, and plucking off the horn spectacles and snowy beard of the envoy, the queen-mother revealed her younger son.

Then turning to the emperor, she said, "He who rides a tiger cannot dismount, but both tiger and rider may be brought to the ground. Only by a lifetime's repentance canst thou make thyself worthy of a mother's love. Go forth to the northern marshes, and when thou hast written a poem as elevated and as understanding as thy brother's, then shall thy people welcome thee again."

This is the poem which, after years of absence, convinced all of the emperor's repentance:

The man in the book of odes who was given a quince
Wanted to pay it back with diamonds and rubies.
When I think of all the things you have done for me,
How ashamed I am to have done so little for you!

One of twelve *Tales from Timbuktú*, folk stories possessing the glamor and romance of the East, effectively elaborated by Constance Smedley Armfield. Reprinted by special arrangement with the publishers, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York.



THE GIANT AND THE HERDBOY

By Eunice Fuller

IVAN, the herdboy, lay on the hillside watching the king's sheep. It was growing dark, but he did not start for home. For in all the world he had no home to go to. There was no one who belonged to him—neither father nor mother, nor brother nor sister, nor grandfather nor grandmother, nor so much as a stepmother. Even his best friends, the sheep, belonged to the king.

Ivan took good care of them nevertheless; and got his black bread and white cheese to eat in return. Day and night he stayed with his flock out in the open field; and only when the storm beat down very wet did he crawl into the little hut he had built at the edge of the forest.

It was not so very lonely after all. For there were ninety-nine sheep to keep out of bogs and briers. And besides, there were ever so many good games he could

play by himself, vaulting over the bushes with his crook and playing little tunes on a reed.

It was only at the dead of night when he woke up to hear the wolves howling, howling in the dark, and the icy shivers began to chase each other along his back, that he couldn't help wishing for a warm bed at home, with a stout father sleeping near by.

But the queer part was that whenever he thought what kind of father he should like to have, he could think of nobody but the king himself mounted on his charger. And as for a mother, who could be better than the queen with her nice, motherly arms that hugged the little Princess Anastasia? When it came to a sister, Ivan could imagine no one more satisfactory than the princess herself with her whisking curls and her blue eyes that were roguish and friendly both at the same time. But that, of course, was out of the question. So he contented himself with naming the softest, whitest, curliest lamb Anastasia, and let it go at that.

But to-night as he lay on the hillside he couldn't help thinking what fun it would be if the lamb Anastasia were really the princess, and all the other sheep were boys and girls so that they could play hide-and-seek together among the rocks and bushes in the moonlight. But the sheep had long since nestled down on the hill, and there was nothing for Ivan but to watch the moon as it came up and up behind the black mountain across the valley. His eyes began to blink, and he felt himself slipping, slipping off to sleep.

A cry broke through the quiet pasture. Ivan started up. "Wolves!" said his heart. "Wolves! Wolves again!" But it was not a fierce sound after all. Again it came, loud like a roar of temper wailing off into a moan.

Ivan listened. "No sheep could bleat like that," thought he. Nevertheless he looked. There in the moonlight the nine-and-ninety woolly shapes shone dimly, huddled safe against the hill.

Once more the sound came, fairly bursting through the air. Ivan held his breath. It was not the cry of animals but of men, of several men perhaps, shouting together. "A party of hunters," thought Ivan, "lost in the forest!" And he breathed again.

Picking up his crook, he dashed off up the hill, along the edge of the wood. "I'm coming!" he shouted. "Coming!" But the hunters did not seem to hear. The same cry kept ringing through the trees ahead, louder and louder as he ran. It seemed directly opposite him now, somewhere in the forest. He turned in, feeling his way with his crook among the black shadows of the branches.

There was a crashing and stirring. The trees before him trembled. Ivan stopped and looked up. Full in the moonlight, halfway to the tree tops, gleamed the gigantic shoulder of a man. His head was bent, and he seemed to be sitting down, gazing intently at something near the ground. As he moved his arm, the trees swayed and creaked.

Ivan crept nearer. Through an opening between the trees he could see the giant's great hands fumbling over his foot. With a piece of fur he was trying to stop a small cataract of blood that was bursting out from it. Every now and then, in his clumsy efforts, he seemed to hurt himself more, for he would throw back his head and give the same deafening howl Ivan had heard before.

Ivan shivered. In all his life he had never seen a giant; and terrified as he was, he must have a good look at this one. Crouching, he stole through the

shadow to a little thicket at the giant's side, and parting the twigs, leaned eagerly forward. But he had reckoned too much on the bushes. Under his weight they cracked and bent, and snapped altogether. His foot slipped, and losing his balance, he crashed through the brush at the giant's very elbow.

With a swoop the giant grasped at him. But Ivan was too quick. He dodged just out of reach, and ran as he had never run before.

"Little creature! Little creature!" called the giant. "Don't run away. I won't hurt you. Come back, do come back and help me. If you will bind up my foot for me, I will give you a reward."

Ivan's heart thumped. The giant could crush him in one of his great hands. But he was in pain, and he had a kindly face. It would be mean to leave him there alone.

"Oh, little creature," moaned the giant again, "don't leave me. I promise I won't hurt you. Do come, do come."

Ivan turned. Staunchly he walked over to the giant's foot, and running his hand gently along the sole, picked the rocks and pebbles out of the great gash.

The giant sighed with relief. "Thank you!" he said. "I hurt it rooting up an oak tree, and then I walked on it."

Ivan pulled off his blouse, and tore it into long pieces. Knotting them together, he made a strip five or six yards long. He laid it against the wound, and the giant drew it over the top of the foot where it was hard for him to reach. Between them they made a neat, firm bandage of it, with all the knots on top.

The giant beamed. "That feels better," he said. "And now, little herdboy, I will show you how a giant keeps his word. If you are not afraid to sit upon my

shoulder, I will take you where no little creature has ever been: to see a giants' merrymaking. We are holding a wedding-feast now, and there will be plenty of fun, you may be sure. Come, I will take good care of you."

Ivan picked up his crook. This would be more fun than hide-and-seek on the hill. He was not in the least afraid, and he felt on good terms with the giant already. "I'd like to go," he said.



"Good! Good!" cried the giant, chuckling with the noise of a happy waterfall. "Up with you, then. Lean against my neck, and take tight hold of my long hair." And with that, he picked Ivan gently up and tucked him snugly just below his right ear.

"Why, you're too light! I can't feel you at all!" he gurgled, as if it were the best joke in the world. "And I must fix it so that my brothers can't see you. Here is a belt for you. Put it on, and you will be quite invisible."

So he handed Ivan a long piece of gray gauze, so fine that in the moonlight he could hardly see it at all. Ivan tied it about his waist. And then although he pinched himself and knew quite well that he

was all there, he couldn't so much as see his own toes.

As for the giant, now that he could neither see Ivan nor feel his weight, he began to be a little nervous. "Once in a while," he said, "I wish you'd stand up and shout my name 'Costan' into my ear, so that I'll know you haven't tumbled off. And now, are you ready? Hold tight, and we'll go on."

Costan raised himself, and strode off with a long, limping step through the forest. To Ivan it was like being on a great ship at sea, going up a long wave, and down. He felt that he might fall asleep if it were not such fun sitting there on Costan's shoulder and watching the tree tops glide past the moon.

The trees grew fewer and fewer. Ivan swung around, and peered ahead, clinging to Costan's hair. They were coming to a great open space in the midst of the forest, a meadow thronged with giants and giantesses. There seemed to be hundreds of them, dressed not like Costan in skins but in wonderful shimmering garments that blew about their shoulders like clouds of mist in the moonlight. In the center of them all was a huge fountain that shot up in a silver torrent far above their heads.

One of the giants came running to meet Costan. "Oh, here you are!" he cried. "We were afraid you weren't coming." And with that, he gave him a friendly pat on the shoulder that nearly sent Ivan spinning off a hundred feet or more to the ground.

Costan explained about his hurt foot. "I'll just sit and look on for to-night," he said, and chuckled to himself, thinking of Ivan.

And so Ivan, safely nestled on Costan's shoulder, watched till his eyes stood out, as the giants danced and played giant games, chasing each other through the

fountain, with a shower of spray like a whirling rain-storm. They wrestled, they leaped, they sang till all the trees trembled.

Just as the fun was at its liveliest, there was a mighty gurgle, and the fountain, which had been casting itself so high into the air, sank suddenly into the earth. The oldest giantess of all gathered her great fluttering robes about her, and striding to the edge of the forest, pulled up a fir tree with one wrench of her wrist.

"Midnight!" whispered Costan.

Silently the giants crowded about the uprooted tree.

"Este tenues!" cried the giantess.

Instantly the giants seemed to flatten out. Their backs seemed to come forward, and their fronts to shrink back. Their arms, their legs, their heads, their bodies, grew thin as cardboard. They stood there like great paper-dolls, taller than the trees. One by one, they stepped into the hole where the tree had been, and cut their way down into the ground like huge knives.

Costan bent his ear. "Are you there, little herdboys?" he whispered.

"Yes, Costan," cried Ivan.

"Keep tight hold, then," cautioned Costan, "and don't be afraid. I'm going to take you with me underground."

As the last giant vanished, Costan got up slowly and walked toward the hole. With every step, Ivan could feel him shrinking, until his shoulder was nothing but a long, thin edge.

There was a quick moment of darkness, and suddenly they were in a hall shining from floor to ceiling with gold, and so vast that Ivan could not see to the end of it. Down the center, around a long table sat the giants, all in their natural shapes again.

Costan slipped into the huge seat that was left for him, and the banquet went merrily on. To Ivan, who never in all his life had had anything but bread and cheese, with a little fruit sometimes and a sugar cake at Christmas, it seemed an impossible dream. There were grapes as big as the oranges above ground, pheasants the size of eagles, and cakes and tarts and puddings as big around as the towers of the king's palace.

But Costan sat silent and uneasy. Then Ivan realized what was the matter: *Costan was not sure that Ivan was there.* Steadying himself with his crook, Ivan scrambled up. Standing on tiptoe, he could almost reach the giant's ear.

"Costan!" he whispered, as loud as he dared, "I'm here—all safe."

Costan beamed with relief, and fell to joking and eating with the rest. But every now and then he would poise a tiny piece of cake or meat carelessly above his right shoulder, where Ivan would make it disappear as completely as he had himself.

At last the oldest giantess rose in her place, to show that the banquet had come to an end. Amid all the jollity and confusion Costan leaned over and took from the table a giant roll, as big to Ivan as a whole loaf of bread.

"Here!" he whispered, below the scraping of the giant chairs. "Tuck this in your bag, little herdboy, as a reminder of a giant's promise. And don't forget Costan in the world up above."

As he spoke, everything was suddenly lost in a whirl of darkness—the giants, the hall and the feast, even Costan himself. The shouts and laughter of the huge banqueters grew fainter and fainter, till they faded away into silence.

A sudden bleat made Ivan open his eyes. He was lying on the hillside near his sheep, and the mountain across the valley glowed red in the sunrise.

"And so," thought Ivan sadly, "it was a dream after all—the giants, the fountain, the banquet, and dear Costan as well."

He reached for his crook, and started back in amazement. For though he could feel the handle tightly grasped in his fingers, it seemed to his startled eyes that the crook suddenly rose up of itself and stood clearly outlined against the morning sky. As he stepped back, the crook sprang after him. When he walked forward, the crook bobbed along by his side. He could feel his hand upon it, but when he looked he could see plainly that there was no hand there.

Ivan rubbed his eyes. Was he still dreaming then? But no, everything was just as usual—the sheep, the hillside and the morning sky. Was it he or the crook that was bewitched? He looked down at himself in alarm—and saw nothing but the stones and grass of the pasture. *There was no Ivan to be seen*: no arms nor hands nor legs nor feet.

A sudden thought came over him. He felt of his waist. Sure enough! It was tied about with gauze.

"The invisible belt!" he cried, and pulled it off.

In a twinkling there he was, arms, legs, hands, feet, just the same as ever. He folded up the long, wispy sash and stuck it into his bag. Inside, his hand hit something hard and bulgy. It was the giant's roll—the great loaf Costan had given him.

It was past Ivan's breakfast time, and the sight of the tempting white bread made him hungry. He tried to break off a piece, but the great roll would not so much as bend. He drew out his knife, but the harder he cut,

the firmer and sounder the loaf seemed to be. He could not even dent it.

Provoked and impatient, he tried with his teeth. At the first bite, the hard crust yielded. Something cold and slippery struck his tongue and rolled out clinking on the ground.

Ivan stooped and stared. There at his feet lay a great round gold piece as big as a peppermint drop. In amazement he looked at the loaf in his hand. There was not a break anywhere. It was as smooth and whole as before. He bit again and again. Another gold piece, and another fell at his feet, as round and shining as the first. But the loaf remained unbroken.

Ivan's eyes almost started from his head. In all his life he had never seen a gold piece before; and whatever he should do with so many he had not the least idea. He might, of course, build a palace and live like a lord. But that would take him away from the sheep, and the king and queen and Anastasia. On the whole, he decided he was much better as he was, where he could roll the gold pieces down the hill and race after them to the bottom.

Then a splendid idea struck him. To-morrow was the princess' birthday. For a long time he had been wondering what he could give her. Here was just the thing! What could be better than a heap of the pretty gold pieces to play with? He sat down at once, and bit and bit at the loaf till he had enough of them to fill his bag to overflowing. Bag, loaf, belt, and all, he hid in his hut at the edge of the forest. Then he ate his black bread and cheese and went back to his sheep, bounding over the boulders for sheer happiness.

As soon as the sheep were settled for the night, he ran to the hut again. Tying the magic belt about his

waist, he took up the bag of gold pieces and trudged off with them across the fields.

In the moonlight the palace towers rose straight and shining. Every window gleamed, darkly outlined. Ivan did not hesitate. He knew quite well which one he wanted. It was the window of the birthday room, where once every year all the servants and the shepherds were allowed to come to see Anastasia's presents. To-morrow, he thought, with a catch of his breath, would be the day.

The bulky form of a guard broke the bright wall of the palace ahead. For an instant Ivan shrank back. Then with a smothered laugh he dashed across the grass, underneath the man's very nose. The guard turned sharply. But there was no one to be seen. Palace and park lay bright and still in the moonlight.

Ivan had gained the palace wall. Just as he had remembered, a stout vine with the trunk of a small tree ran up the side to the very window of the birthday room. He tried it with his foot. It would not have held a man, but it could bear Ivan even with a bag of gold. Breathless, he climbed—so fast that the vine had barely time to tremble before he was at the top. At his shoulder the casement of the birthday room stood ajar. With one tug he swung it open, and leaned across the sill.

Ivan gazed. On broad chests all about the room glimmered jewels and toys for the princess; and in the doorway stood a guard, erect and silent, watching over them. Underneath the window, deep in shadow, was a low, cushioned seat.

Something jangled on the floor; and the guard stooped to pick up a knife fallen from his belt. Instantly, Ivan saw his chance. Holding his bag, bottom up, on the window seat, he loosened the strings, letting

the gold fall in a heap in the black shadow. By the time the guard had adjusted his belt again, Ivan was out of the window, climbing down the vine.

Next morning, everything was abuzz at the palace. The servants and shepherds, filing around the birthday room, barely glanced at the gorgeous jewels. Every eye was fixed on a glittering pile of gold pieces in a glass case. They were worth a king's fortune, people said. The princess could buy with them anything in the world her heart desired—castles or coaches, jewels or gowns. And the mystery of it was, no one knew who had sent them. They had suddenly appeared in the middle of the night. The whole court was alive with conjectures.

Ivan, filing by with the others, said never a word; but his heart thumped with pride and happiness. Through a half-open door he could see Anastasia herself using four of the great round gold pieces as dishes for her dolls. Ivan beamed. To-morrow, he decided, the princess should have a birthday, as well as to-day.

As soon as it was dark, he hurried to his hut, drew out the magic loaf from its hiding-place, and bit and bit till he had a bagful of gold pieces again. Then he put on his invisible belt and ran to the palace. Everything happened almost as before; and he got away, down the vine, and back to his sheep before anyone was the wiser. On the window seat next morning the princess found the shining heap. And if the court had been excited before, now it was in an uproar of astonishment. Hereafter, the king ordered, two guards should stand hidden beside the window to discover who it was that brought the gold.

So night after night for a week Ivan left the gold pieces. And morning after morning the guards re-

ported to the king that no one had been there. The window, they said, had suddenly swung open; and a bag, jumping unaided from the sill, had emptied itself on the seat below, disappearing through the window as magically as it had come. At last the king, tired of the mystery, declared that he would watch himself.

The eighth night was dark and rainy, and Ivan slipped over the soggy ground. When he got to the entrance of the park, he realized with a dreadful sinking of his heart that he had forgotten to put on the magic belt. He turned to go back, but the thought of the dismal, stormy walk made him suddenly bold. The palace-guards, he reflected, would be keeping close to shelter, a night like this. He could easily escape them, and crawl up the vine unsuspected. Once at the window, he had only to watch his chance, pop in the gold, and fly back in the darkness to his sheep.

So Ivan kept on. He stole softly by the guardhouse where the lazy soldier lounged half asleep, and crept stealthily up the dripping vine. The window swung open with a creak, and Ivan, frightened, crouched breathless beneath the sill. Minutes passed. There was a stir behind one of the great curtains. The guard was moving. Now perhaps would be the best time.

Ivan reached over and began emptying his bag. A heavy hand seized his collar and dragged him bodily into the room. By the light of a flickering lantern Ivan found himself face to face with—the king!

"Ivan!" exclaimed the king.

There was a pause, Ivan blushing like a culprit, with the empty bag trembling in his hands.

The king frowned. "To think that you," he cried, "my best herdboys, whom I have trusted, should come to steal the gold which a good fairy brings the princess! Well, you have given me good service before this, and

I will not treat you harshly now. But go, go at once, and never let me see your face again."

And with that, he led him down a staircase and thrust him out into the dark.

Choking and wretched, Ivan ran back to his hut. Gathering up his loaf and belt, he crammed them into his bag, and started off into the world.

"Good-by, my sheep!" he cried; and stooped to fondle the little lamb Anastasia.

"I suppose now," he reflected miserably, "I shall have to be a great lord after all."

By the time he got to the town, day was breaking. The rain had stopped, and rosy clouds floated across the eastern sky. A sunbeam slanted over the roof tops, and shone into Ivan's face. He felt happier all of a sudden; and taking his loaf, he bit a dozen great gold pieces out of it. Then wrapping it up in the magic belt so that no one could see it, he knocked at a cottage door. Inside, he found a warm breakfast, and dried himself off by the fire.

A dazzling scheme slowly unfolded in his mind. As soon as breakfast was done, he went to the coachmaker and ordered a great gold coach; to the tailor and ordered a golden suit; to the hatter for a hat with golden plumes. And when the tradespeople heard the clink of his gold pieces, they were very glad to serve him, you may be sure.

Only the coachmaker demurred. "A gold coach is nothing," said he, "without a coat-of-arms on the door."

"But I haven't any," said Ivan.

"Never mind!" replied the coachmaker, "I will make you one. How did your good luck begin?"

"From a loaf of bread," said Ivan, "and a giant."

So, the coachmaker painted and painted on the coach door. When he had finished, there was as fine a coat-

of-arms as you would wish to see—a loaf of bread against a background of gold pieces, and a giant standing up above.

Then six white horses with gold trappings were harnessed to the coach; and six servants in golden livery took their places—two riding ahead, two riding behind, and two sitting up very straight on the box. Ivan stepped inside, all dressed in his golden suit and the hat with the golden plumes. Underneath his arm he carried the giant's loaf wrapped up in the magic belt. (But of course nobody could see that.)

"Drive to the king's palace!" cried Ivan.

So they drove; and all the people along the way were so amazed at the magnificence of the coach that they ran and told the king that some great prince was coming to visit him. The king dashed to put on his crown; and just as the coach drew up at the palace gate, he sat down on his throne with all his court about him.

Ivan walked up the great hall and bowed low. And all the courtiers bowed in return to the splendid young prince. Before the king could say a word, Ivan threw back his head and told the story of the gold pieces from beginning to end.

For a moment the king was dumb with astonishment and remorse. Then he spoke. "Ivan," said he, "I have done you a wrong. If there is anything I can do to make it right, you have only to tell me."

Ivan beamed. "There is only one thing in all the world I want," he cried, "and that is to have you for my father, the queen for my mother, and Anastasia for my sister!"

"Where is your real father?" asked the king.

"And where is your real mother?" asked the queen.

"Where is your real sister?" cried Anastasia.

But to all these questions the herdboy gave a satisfactory answer. "I never had any," he said.

"Very well then," cried the king. "You are adopted! I will be your father; the queen shall be your mother; Anastasia shall be your sister. What is more, in five years and a day, when you are quite grown-up, you shall marry the princess!"

But by the time he got to that part Ivan and Anastasia were too much excited to hear. The minute he finished they bowed and curtsied as well-mannered children should, and ran into the courtyard to play tiddledywinks with the gold pieces, over the bread.

Nevertheless, it turned out as the king had said, and in five years and a day, when they were quite grown-up, Ivan and the princess were married. And ever after in the palace treasury instead of heaps of gold pieces for robbers to steal, there was nothing but a single loaf of bread.

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THE SINGING BELL

By Anna Wahlenberg

JAKOB was as gay as a lark. He had recently received his master's certificate as glass blower, and now he was on his way to earn his living by his craft.

As he trotted along the broad highway, he was seized with the desire to turn to the right into a large forest, about which he had heard wonderful things. Within it, so it was said, was a mountain wherein was to be found a sleeping fairy, who had it in her power to make a man the first in his profession, a master of masters. It needed only to awaken her from her trance. But everyone knew this much—that it could only be done by the ringing of a bell, which also was to be found in the wood. There were many who had heard the peal; yes, there were even those who insisted they had seen the bell. But for several hundred years no one had had it in his hands and tried to ring it.

When Jakob was a little boy he felt sure he had heard the bell's peal, like sweet, far-off music. And only when he stood very still could he hear it. But he never had time to go into the forest to get nearer the sound, so close to his work had his master kept him.

Now, however, he was free; now he could go and listen. Soon, too, he heard the ringing of the bell, which seemed stronger and sweeter than before. It sounded full of joy, like the splashing of a waterfall or the frolic of a spring wind. He heard it very clearly

and continuously. At last it sounded right over his head; and when he looked up, there it hung, like a great shining flower cup among the birches' light green foliage.

All the others who had seen the bell had climbed up the tree after it; but when they had tried to take it away, it floated off like a soap bubble. But Jakob reached out longing arms to it—and immediately it fell like ripe fruit into his hands.

In a transport of joy, he let the bell swing softly back and forth, whereupon the whole forest was filled with the loveliest music. And as he listened, a rocky wall in front of him split asunder, and he saw within a long, illuminated passageway. Without any fear, he entered; and the farther he went in, the greater were the number of shining lights which flamed along the crystal walls and increased more and more until he stood in a magnificent hall where glorious palms, watered by the continual splashing of fountains, drooped their leaves over a raised marble pavement where a young maiden lay sleeping upon a couch with a purple coverlet.

Jakob drew near to her, and after he had stood a while in contemplation of her loveliness, he swung the bell in his hand. The fairy's eyelids trembled. Suddenly she opened them, raised herself, and sat a few moments, dreaming and listening to the music.

"I have slept a long while undisturbed," said she, smiling, "but I am always glad to be awakened by the sound of my bell. He who rings it shall not leave here empty-handed."

She lifted the cover from a golden box which stood at the head of her couch, and handed Jakob what seemed to be only a common blowpipe, such as glass blowers use in their work.

"This pipe will help you to make many wonderful

things, which will bring happiness and health to human beings," said she. "But use it only when you hear the song of my bell in your ears. Take good care to bear this warning in mind."

As she spoke, she sank back wearily on her pillow.

"What would happen if I didn't?" asked Jakob.

But the fairy had already closed her eyes, and only whispered softly, "Bear this in mind! Bear this in mind!"

And now she slept as heavily as before. Jakob tried to waken her with the bell, but she no longer heard it, and he was forced to go out again into the living, wide-awake world.

As soon as he had come out of the mountain, the passageway closed, and as he stood blinded by the sunshine, the bell slipped from his hand.

Like a shining bubble, it floated up into the sky and vanished from his gaze.

But though Jakob could no longer see the bell, he still could hear it. Like soft, low music its tones followed him the whole way through the woods and thence to the high road, even until he came to the noisy town. In the streets he heard it no more.

But in his own workshop, as soon as he put the fairy's blowpipe in his mouth, he again noticed the tinkling of the bell. And the mass of molten glass under his hands assumed the loveliest forms.

Never before had he succeeded in making anything so beautiful and so perfect.

The next morning he set out with a great bowl and some goblets to the nearest merchant, who was so pleased with the beautiful, fragile things that he paid double as much for them as Jakob expected, and wished to buy all he could let him have.

Joyously Jakob returned home and worked still harder, always to the invisible bell's soft music. Every-



THE BELL'S TONES FOLLOWED HIM THROUGH THE WOOD



thing he made was immediately bought by rich and distinguished people. Soon the whole town knew what a wonderful artist Jakob had become. As to his goblets and drinking cups, it was at last reported that they had power to bring happiness and health to all who drank from them.

Dukes and princes came personally to his workshop, ordered what they wished, watched him while he worked, and paid him so generously that he soon became a wealthy man.

Now it happened there was a little person who was neither rich nor distinguished who also liked to see Jakob work. This was Rosalinde, the fifteen-year-old daughter of the poor potter on the other side of the street.

Whenever Rosalinde had an idle hour, it was her habit to poke her head through Jakob's open window and follow rapturously the noble forms of the shining glass goblets as they grew under his hands. And whenever Jakob looked up in the midst of his work, it seemed pleasant to meet the smile on the fair girl's face.

One day she took courage and said, "Dearest Master Jakob, will you not also blow a little goblet for me? If you will, I'll run errands for you for a whole year."

Jakob laughed. "Come now!" said he, "run my errands, and I will make you a goblet when I find the time."

And Rosalinde did as he said. She brought water and food to him. She decorated his door frames with garlands of green; she tripped on light feet about his workshop to do his bidding; she put everything in its right place, and brought the loveliest flowers for his table.

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One year slipped by, and then another; and never

did Jakob find time to blow for Rosalinde the goblet he had promised her.

Sometimes in a humble voice she reminded him of it, and he would then say, "To-morrow, perhaps to-morrow."

But when the next day came, new and distinguished customers happened in, who must be satisfied. Indeed, so many came that Jakob, who did not know of anything more amusing than to blow his lovely glass, found it was almost too much of a good thing. He was often so tired that his ears buzzed, and he could scarcely hear the notes of the invisible bell, which up to this time had always sounded whenever he put the blowpipe to his mouth.

One morning Rosalinde's patience would stand it no longer.

"I have waited for my goblet all of two years," said she, "and if you will not make it for me now, I will go away and never come here again."

Jakob smiled. He did not believe that in spite of his neglect of her she would keep her word, for she liked very much to see him turn out the lovely works of art. But he certainly wished to keep her friendship and therefore he nodded and said, "Just wait until I have finished with the goblet I am now working on, and then I will blow one for you."

Rosalinde clapped her hands with joy; she had never been so near to the fulfillment of her wish; now she would really get it! She worked with great zeal while she waited; and finally the goblet that had been begun stood finished upon the table. At last Jakob lifted up the blowpipe to blow one for her very own.

But at the same moment the door was thrown open, and in came the royal chamberlain, who announced the country's king, and his distinguished guests, the

king and queen of Azurien and their five little princesses.

Jakob laid down the blowpipe and the lump of glass which was destined for Rosalinde's goblet. It could wait. But he heard a sob just behind him, and when he turned around he caught a glimpse of a young girl's brown skirt as its wearer vanished through the window.

Rosalinde had taken flight, fully determined never to come back again.

But now in walked the two kings, the queen, and the five little princesses. So Jakob must set to work.

After the grown people had received their drinking cups, nothing would do but each of the little princesses must have one, too.

But never had Jakob felt so weary as on this day, and weaker and weaker sounded the bell's notes in his ears.

When he had finished the third princess's goblet, he bowed low before the royal company and begged that he be allowed to wait until later in the day to make the last two cups, for he felt that now he could not do any more.

Immediately the two princesses who had not received any goblets began to cry and carry on. They had come there to see him blow goblets for them, and they would not think of waiting!

So Jakob must make another effort. But now the bell sounded like a faint whistle only, and when the fourth princess's glass was finished he again made a low bow before the royal company and laid down the blowpipe.

"Your majesties must pardon me," said he, "but I cannot blow any more. I am not well."

"So, then, there's nothing more to do about it," said the queen, and turned to go.

But at the same time the princess who had not

received any goblet began to shriek to the heavens, and no one could comfort her either with cake or candy. She *would* have her goblet, she roared, and she stamped on the floor with both feet, and would not budge from the place.

"You shall have double pay for the last goblet," said her father the king to Jakob.

And his country's own king clapped him upon the shoulder. "Come, hurry up now, my friend," said he, "no one can deny a princess anything."

In despair Jakob again put the blowpipe in his mouth. He listened as usual for the ring of the bell, but was not certain that he heard it.

There sounded, sure enough, a faint whistling in his ears; but whether it came from the bell, or was the result of his own weariness, he did not know.

Yet for all that, blow he must!

But at the same moment that the glass swelled up, the pipe fell from his mouth; then his arms dropped, and he fell senseless to the floor.

When Jakob came to himself again, the royal company were gone; but the neighbors were standing around him, and among them was Rosalinde—she who would never come again!

"My blowpipe," said he, "where is my blowpipe?"

The first thing he thought was that he had lost it, and he was very anxious lest it had been injured.

But no harm had come to the blowpipe. Rosalinde had picked it up from the floor, and would give it to him. Jakob put out his right hand to take it, but found to his horror that he could not hold it. He put out his left hand, but that proved no better. Both hands hung from his wrists like withered leaves.

At last he knew what the fairy meant when she bade him, "Bear this in mind!" But it was now too late.

Never more would he be able to use his blowpipe and make his wonderful works of art!

His despair showed itself in two great tears which he could not wipe away.

From that hour, Jakob moved about like an unhappy ghost. The one bright spot in his suffering was Rosalinde's care; she waited on him, sang for him, put flowers in his buttonhole, and followed him on his restless wanderings in the forest.

Jakob thought that perhaps he could manage yet once again to hear the wonderful bell, whose tones had not sounded in his ears since his hands had become helpless. But he listened in vain! It seemed to have entirely disappeared from the woods.

Then one day, while he stood and watched Rosalinde as she gathered flowers for him, he suddenly heard the welcome peal.

He looked around him, but he did not know from whence the bell came. And as soon as Rosalinde took leave of him the bell grew silent.

And he did not hear it until the next day, when Rosalinde stood at his open window and called good morning. But then it rang out, loud and clear.

Jakob soon realized that the wonderful bell, itself invisible, must be hanging from an invisible branch over her head, and that it was when she was at his house, and only then, that the sweet soft tones were heard there.

Then came a day when Rosalinde did not appear, and when Jakob went over to the potter's to ask after her, he learned that she lay ill of a high fever, and her parents were afraid she might die.

The world looked dark for Jakob. It seemed as though the sun had gone down, though it stood high in the arch of heaven. The whole day he roved about in

the neighborhood of the potter's house, so that he might ask about her, and know if she were still alive.

When night came he went home. But he couldn't even think of going to bed, and hour after hour found him wandering restlessly about his workshop.

Suddenly, as he was thus roaming around, he heard footsteps and voices outside. Then some one knocked upon his door, and when it was opened he took a step backward in utter surprise.

Upon the threshold stood Rosalinde, her cheeks flushed and her eyes bright with fever, followed by her parents, who seemed paralyzed with fear.

"We could not prevent it," they declared. "She slipped away from us."

Rosalinde went up to Jakob. "You shall now blow me my goblet, as you promised," she said.

Jakob raised his arms with the lame hands. But in the excitement of the fever she did not understand.

"I must have my goblet," she repeated.

Jakob thought it might be best to pretend to please her. She would then see for herself how impossible her wish was.

He bade her father heat the oven and, in a word, make all the preparations. When this was done, the potter took the blowpipe down from the shelf and put it between Jakob's lips, though he well knew that the next instant it would slip out again.

But—wonderful to tell—it did not do this. As soon as Jakob felt the pipe between his lips, a feeling of power flowed through him. He received strength to hold it fast while he blew the molten glass. And as this swelled up and rounded itself, he heard with rapture the invisible bell singing more sweetly than ever before. His soul was filled with delight. He raised his wrists and pressed them against the mass of glass. He felt he

must be able to create a work of art with the aid of his strong will alone.

After a moment's time the potter whispered to his wife, "Now, just look! A miracle has happened! He can move his hands!"

And now the potter's wife saw it also. Jakob's fingers worked with the glass as nimbly and as ably as before. But Jakob himself did not take in anything of this. He was conscious of nothing except his work. He saw only that his most beautiful creation was about to come forth, perfected, as it was in his thought. And soon he held it in his hand, shining and lovely.

Then he hastened to the cupboard, took a flask of wine from it, filled the new goblet, and held it out to Rosalinde.

She drank the wine, her gaze fixed deep in the bottom of the goblet, and when she raised her eyes they were clear and free from the light of fever. Then she looked around as though she had just awakened from a dream.

"My goblet!" she cried out. "I have my goblet! And your hands are as skillful as ever, Master Jakob."

And now for the first time Jakob looked at them and saw they were no longer like withered leaves. And he rejoiced with a great joy. Then he turned anxiously toward Rosalinde.

"But how does it really help matters?" said he. "For all that, I cannot work as before. Once the invisible bell sang for me whenever I listened for it. Now it sings only when you are in my house."

Rosalinde did not answer. She only smiled. But when Jakob saw that, he, too, smiled. They were both thinking of a remedy whereby Jakob could get the bell to sing whenever he wished it. They would marry, and Rosalinde could always be in his home.

Three days later the wedding took place. And never again did Jakob work at his art unless he could hear the music of the singing bell.

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THE GRIFFIN AND THE MINOR CANON

By Frank R. Stockton

OVER the great door of an old, old church, which stood in a quiet town of a far-away land, there was carved in stone the figure of a large griffin. The oldtime sculptor had done his work with great care, but the image he had made was not a pleasant one to look at. It had a large head, with enormous open mouth and savage teeth. From its back arose great wings, armed with sharp hooks and prongs. It had stout legs in front, with projecting claws, but there were no legs behind, the body running out into a long and powerful tail, finished off at the end with a barbed point. This tail was coiled up under him, the end sticking up, just back of his wings.

The sculptor, or the people who had ordered this stone figure, had evidently been very much pleased with it, for little copies of it, also in stone, had been placed here and there along the sides of the church,

not very far from the ground, so that people could easily look at them and ponder on their curious forms. There were a great many other sculptures on the outside of this church—saints, martyrs, grotesque heads of men, beasts, and birds, as well as those of other creatures which cannot be named, because nobody knows exactly what they were. But none were so curious and interesting as the great griffin over the door and the little griffins on the sides of the church.

A long, long distance from the town, in the midst of dreadful wilds scarcely known to man, there dwelt the griffin whose image had been put up over the church door. In some way or other the oldtime sculptor had seen him, and afterwards, to the best of his memory—which was not very good—had copied his figure in stone. The griffin had never known this until, hundreds of years afterward, he heard from a bird, from a wild animal, or in some manner which it is not easy to find out, that there was a likeness of him on the old church in the distant town.

Now, this griffin had no idea whatever how he looked. He had never seen a mirror, and the streams where he lived were so turbulent and violent that a quiet piece of water, which would reflect the image of anything looking into it, could not be found. Being, as far as could be ascertained, the very last of his race, he had never seen another griffin. Therefore it was that, when he heard of this stone image of himself, he became very anxious to know what he looked like, and at last he determined to go to the old church and see for himself what manner of being he was. So he started off from the dreadful wilds, and flew on and on until he came to the countries inhabited by men, where his appearance in the air created great con-

sternation. But he alighted nowhere, keeping up a steady flight until he reached the suburbs of the town which had his image on its church. Here, late in the afternoon, he alighted in a green meadow by the side of a brook, and stretched himself on the grass to rest. His great wings were tired, for he had not made such a long flight in a century or more.

The news of his coming spread quickly over the town, and the people, frightened nearly out of their wits by the arrival of so extraordinary a visitor, fled into their houses and shut themselves up. The griffin called loudly for someone to come to him; but the more he called, the more afraid the people were to show themselves. At length he saw two laborers hurrying to their homes through the fields, and in a terrible voice he commanded them to stop. Not daring to disobey, the men stood, trembling.

"What is the matter with you all?" cried the griffin. "Is there not a man in your town who is brave enough to speak to me?"

"I think," said one of the laborers, his voice shaking so that his words could hardly be understood, "that—perhaps—the minor canon—would come."

"Go, call him, then!" said the griffin. "I want to see him."

The minor canon, who filled a subordinate position in the old church, had just finished the afternoon service, and was coming out of a side door, with three aged women who had formed the weekday congregation. He was a young man of kind disposition, and very anxious to do good to the people of the town. Apart from his duties in the church, where he conducted services every weekday, he visited the sick and the poor, counseled and assisted persons who were in trouble, and taught a school composed entirely of the

bad children in the town, with whom nobody else would have anything to do. Whenever the people wanted something difficult done for them, they always went to the minor canon. Thus it was that the laborer thought of the young priest when he found that someone must come and speak to the griffin.

The minor canon had not heard of the strange event, which was known to the whole town except himself and the three old women, and when he was informed of it, and was told that the griffin had asked to see him, he was greatly amazed and frightened.

"Me!" he exclaimed. "He has never heard of me! What should he want with *me*?"

"Oh, you must go instantly!" cried the two men. "He is very angry now because he has been kept waiting so long, and nobody knows what may happen if you don't hurry to him."

The poor minor canon would rather have had his hand cut off than to go out to meet an angry griffin, but he felt that it was his duty to go, for it would be a woeful thing if injury should come to the people of the town because he was not brave enough to obey the summons of the griffin; so, pale and frightened, he started off.

"Well," said the griffin, as soon as the young man came near, "I am glad to see that there is some one who has the courage to come to me."

The minor canon did not feel very courageous, but he bowed his head.

"Is this the town," said the griffin, "where there is a church with a likeness of myself over one of the doors?"

The minor canon looked at the frightful creature before him, and saw that it was, without doubt, exactly like the stone image on the church. "Yes," he said, "you are right."

"Well, then," said the griffin, "will you take me to it? I wish very much to see it."

The minor canon instantly thought that if the griffin entered the town without the people knowing what he came for, some of them would probably be frightened to death, and so he sought to gain time to prepare their minds.

"It is growing dark now," he said, very much afraid, as he spoke, that his words might enrage the griffin, "and objects on the front of the church cannot be seen clearly. It will be better to wait until morning, if you wish to get a good view of the stone image of yourself."

"That will suit me very well," said the griffin. "I see you are a man of good sense. I am tired, and I will take a nap here on this soft grass, while I cool my tail in the little stream that runs near me. The end of my tail gets red-hot when I am angry or excited, and it is quite warm now. So you may go; but be sure and come early to-morrow morning, and show me the way to the church."

The minor canon was glad enough to take his leave, and hurried into the town. In front of the church he found a great many people assembled to hear his report of his interview with the griffin. When they found that he had not come to spread ruin and devastation, but simply to see his stony likeness on the church, they showed neither relief nor gratification, but began to upbraid the minor canon for consenting to conduct the creature into the town.

"What could I do?" cried the young man. "If I should not bring him he would come himself, and perhaps end by setting fire to the town with his red-hot tail."

Still the people were not satisfied, and a great many plans were proposed to prevent the griffin from coming

into the town. Some elderly persons urged that the young men should go out and kill him. But the young men scoffed at such a ridiculous idea. Then someone said that it would be a good thing to destroy the stone image, so that the griffin would have no excuse for entering the town. This proposal was received with such favor that many of the people ran for hammers, chisels, and crowbars with which to tear down and break up the stone griffin. But the minor canon resisted this plan with all the strength of his mind and body. He assured the people that this action would enrage the griffin beyond measure, for it would be impossible to conceal from him that his image had been destroyed during the night.

But they were so determined to break up the stone griffin that the minor canon saw that there was nothing for him to do but to stay there and protect it. All night he walked up and down in front of the church door, keeping away the men who brought ladders by which they might mount to the great stone griffin and knock it to pieces with their hammers and crowbars. After many hours the people were obliged to give up their attempts, and went home to sleep. But the minor canon remained at his post till early morning, and then he hurried away to the field where he had left the griffin.

The monster had just awakened, and rising to his forelegs and shaking himself, he said that he was ready to go into the town. The minor canon, therefore, walked back, the griffin flying slowly through the air at a short distance above the head of his guide. Not a person was to be seen in the streets, and they proceeded directly to the front of the church, where the minor canon pointed out the stone griffin.

The real griffin settled down in the little square be-

fore the church and gazed earnestly at his sculptured likeness. For a long time he looked at it. First he put his head on one side, and then he put it on the other. Then he shut his right eye and gazed with his left, after which he shut his left eye and gazed with his right. Then he moved a little to one side and looked at the image, then he moved the other way. After a while he said to the minor canon, who had been standing by all this time:

"It is, it must be, an excellent likeness! That breadth between the eyes, that expansive forehead, those massive jaws! I feel that it must resemble me. If there is any fault to find with it, it is that the neck seems a little stiff. But that is nothing. It is an admirable likeness—admirable!"

The griffin sat looking at his image all the morning and all the afternoon. The minor canon had been afraid to go away and leave him, and had hoped all through the day that he would soon be satisfied with his inspection and fly away home. But by evening the poor young man was utterly exhausted, and felt that he must eat and sleep. He frankly admitted this fact to the griffin, and asked him if he would not like something to eat. He said this because he felt obliged in politeness to do so; but as soon as he had spoken the words, he was seized with dread lest the monster should demand half a dozen babies, or some tempting repast of that kind.

"Oh, no," said the griffin, "I never eat between the equinoxes. At the vernal and at the autumnal equinox I take a good meal, and that lasts me for half a year. I am extremely regular in my habits, and do not think it healthful to eat at odd times. But if you need food, go and get it, and I will return to the soft grass where I slept last night, and take another nap."

The next day the griffin came again to the little square before the church, and remained there until evening, steadfastly regarding the stone griffin over the door. The minor canon came once or twice to look at him, and the griffin seemed very glad to see him. But the young clergyman could not stay as he had done before, for he had many duties to perform. Nobody went to the church, but the people came to the minor canon's house, and anxiously asked him how long the griffin was going to stay.

"I do not know," he answered, "but I think he will soon be satisfied with looking at his stone likeness, and then he will go away."

But the griffin did not go away. Morning after morning he went to the church, but after a time he did not stay there all day. He seemed to have taken a great fancy to the minor canon, and followed him about as he pursued his various avocations. He would wait for him at the side door of the church, for the minor canon held services every day, morning and evening, though nobody came now. "If anyone should come," he said to himself, "I must be found at my post." When the young man came out, the griffin would accompany him in his visits to the sick and the poor, and would often look into the windows of the schoolhouse where the minor canon was teaching his unruly scholars. All the other schools were closed, but the parents of the minor canon's scholars forced them to go to school, because they were so bad they could not endure them all day at home—griffin or no griffin. But it must be said they generally behaved very well when that great monster sat up on his tail and looked in at the schoolroom window.

When it was perceived that the griffin showed no sign of going away, all the people who were able to

do so left the town. The canons and the higher officers of the church had fled away during the first day of the griffin's visit, leaving behind only the minor canon and some of the men who opened the doors and swept the church. All the citizens who could afford it shut up their houses and traveled to distant parts, and only the working people and the poor were left behind. After some days these ventured to go about and attend to their business, for if they did not work they would starve. They were getting a little used to seeing the griffin, and having been told that he did not eat between equinoxes, they did not feel so much afraid of him as before.

Day by day the griffin became more and more attached to the minor canon. He kept near him a great part of the time, and often spent the night in front of the little house where the young clergyman lived alone. This strange companionship was often burdensome to the minor canon. But, on the other hand, he could not deny that he derived a great deal of benefit and instruction from it. The griffin had lived for hundreds of years, and had seen much, and he told the minor canon many wonderful things.

"It is like reading an old book," said the young clergyman to himself. "But how many books I would have had to read before I would have found out what the griffin has told me about the earth, the air, the water, about minerals, and metals, and growing things, and all the wonders of the world!"

Thus the summer went on, and drew toward its close. And now the people of the town began to be very much troubled again.

"It will not be long," they said, "before the autumnal equinox is here, and then that monster will want to eat. He will be dreadfully hungry, for he has taken so

much exercise since his last meal. He will devour our children. Without doubt, he will eat them all. What is to be done?"

To this question no one could give an answer, but all agreed that the griffin must not be allowed to remain until the approaching equinox. After talking over the matter a great deal, a crowd of the people went to the minor canon, at a time when the griffin was not with him.

"It is all your fault," they said, "that that monster is among us. You brought him here, and you ought to see that he goes away. It is only on your account that he stays here at all, for, although he visits his image every day, he is with you the greater part of the time. If you were not here he would not stay. It is your duty to go away, and then he will follow you, and we shall be free from the dreadful danger which hangs over us."

"Go away!" cried the minor canon, greatly grieved at being spoken to in such a way. "Where shall I go? If I go to some other town, shall I not take this trouble there? Have I a right to do that?"

"No," said the people, "you must not go to any other town. There is no town far enough away. You must go to the dreadful wilds where the griffin lives, and then he will follow you and stay there."

They did not say whether or not they expected the minor canon to stay there also, and he did not ask them anything about it. He bowed his head, and went into his house to think. The more he thought, the more clear it became to his mind that it was his duty to go away, and thus free the town from the presence of the griffin.

That evening he packed a leather bag full of bread and meat, and early the next morning he set out on his

journey to the dreadful wilds. It was a long, weary, and doleful journey, especially after he had gone beyond the habitations of men; but the minor canon kept on bravely, and never faltered. The way was longer than he had expected, and his provisions soon grew so scanty that he was obliged to eat but a little every day; but he kept up his courage, and pressed on, and after many days of toilsome travel he reached the dreadful wilds.

When the griffin found that the minor canon had left the town, he seemed sorry, but showed no disposition to go and look for him. After a few days had passed, he became much annoyed, and asked some of the people where the minor canon had gone. But although the citizens had been so anxious that the young clergyman should go to the dreadful wilds, thinking that the griffin would immediately follow him, they were now afraid to mention the minor canon's destination, for the monster seemed angry already, and if he should suspect their trick, he would doubtless become very much enraged. So everyone said that he did not know, and the griffin wandered about disconsolate. One morning he looked into the minor canon's schoolhouse, which was always empty now, and thought it was a shame that everything should suffer on account of the young man's absence.

"It does not matter so much about the church," he said, "for nobody went there. But it is a pity about the school. I think I will teach it myself until he returns."

It was the hour for opening the school, and the griffin went inside and pulled the rope which rang the school bell. Some of the children who heard the bell ran in to see what was the matter, supposing it to be a joke of one of their companions. But when they saw the griffin they stood astonished and scared.

"Go tell the other scholars," said the monster, "that school is about to open, and that if they are not all here in ten minutes I shall come after them."

In seven minutes every scholar was in his place.

Never was seen such an orderly school. Not a boy or girl moved or uttered a whisper. The griffin climbed into the master's seat, his wide wings spread on each side of him, because he could not lean back in his chair while they stuck out behind, and his great tail coiled around in front of the desk, the barbed end sticking up, ready to tap any boy or girl who might misbehave. The griffin now addressed the scholars, telling them that he intended to teach them while their master was away. In speaking he endeavored to imitate, as far as possible, the mild and gentle tones of the minor canon, but it must be admitted that in this he was not very successful. He had paid a good deal of attention to the studies of the school, and he determined not to attempt to teach them anything new, but to review them in what they had been studying. So he called up the various classes, and questioned them upon their previous lessons. The children racked their brains to remember what they had learned. They were so afraid of the griffin's displeasure that they recited as they had never recited before. One of the boys, far down in his class, answered so well that the griffin was astonished.

"I should think you would be at the head," said he. "I am sure you have never been in the habit of reciting so well. Why is this?"

"Because I did not choose to take the trouble," said the boy, trembling in his boots. He felt obliged to speak the truth, for all the children thought that the great eyes of the griffin could see right through them, and that he would know when they told a falsehood.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," said the griffin. "Go down to the very tail of the class, and if you are not at the head in two days, I shall know the reason why."

The next afternoon this boy was number one.

It was astonishing how much these children now learned of what they had been studying. It was as if they had been educated over again. The griffin used no severity toward them, but there was a look about him which made them unwilling to go to bed until they were sure they knew their lessons for the next day.

The griffin now thought that he ought to visit the sick and the poor, and he began to go about the town for this purpose. The effect upon the sick was miraculous. All, except those who were very ill indeed, jumped from their beds when they heard he was coming, and declared themselves quite well. To those who could not get up he gave herbs and roots, which none of them had ever before thought of as medicines, but which the griffin had seen used in various parts of the world, and most of them recovered. But, for all that, they afterwards said that no matter what happened to them, they hoped that they should never again have such a doctor coming to their bedsides, feeling their pulses and looking at their tongues.

As for the poor, they seemed to have utterly disappeared. All those who had depended upon charity for their daily bread were now at work in some way or other, many of them offering to do odd jobs for their neighbors just for the sake of their meals—a thing which before had been seldom heard of in the town. The griffin could find no one who needed his assistance.

The summer now passed, and the autumnal equinox was rapidly approaching. The citizens were in a state of great alarm and anxiety. The griffin showed no

signs of going away, but seemed to have settled himself permanently among them. In a short time the day for his semi-annual meal would arrive, and then what would happen? The monster would certainly be very hungry, and would devour all their children.

Now they greatly regretted and lamented that they had sent away the minor canon. He was the only one on whom they could have depended in this trouble, for he could talk freely with the griffin, and so find out what could be done. But it would not do to be inactive. Some step must be taken immediately. A meeting of the citizens was called, and two old men were appointed to go and talk to the griffin. They were instructed to offer to prepare a splendid dinner for him on equinox day—one which would entirely satisfy his hunger. They would offer him the fattest mutton, the most tender beef, fish and game of various sorts, and anything of the kind he might fancy. If none of these suited, they were to mention that there was an orphan asylum in the next town.

"Anything would be better," said the citizens, "than to have our dear children devoured."

The old men went to the griffin, but their propositions were not received with favor.

"From what I have seen of the people of this town," said the monster, "I do not think I could relish anything which was prepared by them. They appear to be all cowards, and, therefore, mean and selfish. As for eating one of them, old or young, I could not think of it for a moment. In fact, there was only one creature in the whole place for whom I could have had any appetite, and that is the minor canon, who has gone away. He was brave, and good, and honest, and I think I should have relished him."

"Ah!" said one of the old men, very politely, "in



THE GRIFFIN THRUST HIS TAIL INTO THE BROOK



that case I wish we had not sent him to the dreadful wilds!"

"What!" cried the griffin. "What do you mean? Explain instantly what you are talking about!"

The old man, terribly frightened at what he had said, was obliged to tell how the minor canon had been sent away by the people, in the hope that the griffin might be induced to follow him.

When the monster heard this he became furiously angry. He dashed away from the old man and, spreading his wings, flew backward and forward over the town. He was so much excited that his tail became red-hot, and glowed like a meteor against the evening sky. When at last he settled down in the little field where he usually rested, and thrust his tail into the brook, the steam arose like a cloud, and the water of the stream ran hot through the town. The citizens were greatly frightened, and bitterly blamed the old man for telling about the minor canon.

"It is plain," they said, "that the griffin intended at last to go and look for him, and we should have been saved. Now who can tell what misery you have brought upon us?"

The griffin did not remain long in the little field. As soon as his tail was cool he flew to the town hall and rang the bell. The citizens knew that they were expected to come there, and although they were afraid to go, they were still more afraid to stay away, and they crowded into the hall. The griffin was on the platform at one end, flapping his wings and walking up and down, and the end of his tail was still so warm that it slightly scorched the boards as he dragged it after him.

When everybody who was able to come was there, the griffin stood still and addressed the meeting.

"I have had a contemptible opinion of you," he said, "ever since I discovered what cowards you are, but I had no idea that you were so ungrateful, selfish, and cruel as I now find you to be. Here was your minor canon, who labored day and night for your good, and thought of nothing else but how he might benefit you and make you happy; and as soon as you imagine yourselves threatened with a danger—for well I know you are dreadfully afraid of me—you send him off, caring not whether he returns or perishes, hoping thereby to save yourselves. Now, I had conceived a great liking for that young man, and had intended, in a day or two, to go and look him up. But I have changed my mind about him. I shall go and find him, but I shall send him back here to live among you, and I intend that he shall enjoy the reward of his labor and his sacrifices. Go, some of you, to the officers of the church, who, so cowardly, ran away when I first came here, and tell them never to return to this town under penalty of death. And if, when your minor canon comes back to you, you do not bow yourselves before him, put him in the highest place among you, and serve and honor him all his life, beware of my terrible vengeance! There were only two good things in this town: the minor canon and the stone image of myself over your church door. One of these you have sent away, and the other I shall carry away myself."

With these words he dismissed the meeting; and it was time, for the end of his tail had become so hot that there was danger of its setting fire to the building.

The next morning the griffin came to the church, and tearing the stone image of himself from its fastenings over the great door, he grasped it with his powerful forelegs and flew up into the air. Then, after hovering over the town for a moment, he gave his tail an angry

shake, and took up his flight to the dreadful wilds. When he reached this desolate region, he set the stone griffin upon a ledge of rock which rose in front of the dismal cave he called his home. There the image occupied a position somewhat similar to that it had had over the church door; and the griffin, panting with the exertion of carrying such an enormous load so great a distance, lay down upon the ground, and regarded it with much satisfaction. When he felt somewhat rested he went to look for the minor canon. He found the young man, weak and half-starved, lying under the shadow of a rock. After picking him up and carrying him to his cave, the griffin flew away to a distant marsh, where he procured some roots and herbs which he well knew were strengthening and beneficial to man, though he had never tasted them himself. After eating these the minor canon was greatly revived, and sat up and listened while the griffin told him what had happened in the town.

"Do you know," said the monster, when he had finished, "that I have had, and still have, a great liking for you?"

"I am very glad to hear it," said the minor canon, with his usual politeness.

"I am not at all sure that you would be," said the griffin, "if you thoroughly understood the state of the case, but we will not consider that now. If some things were different, other things would be otherwise. I have been so enraged by discovering the manner in which you have been treated that I have determined that you shall at last enjoy the rewards and honors to which you are entitled. Lie down and have a good sleep, and then I will take you back to the town."

As he heard these words, a look of trouble came over the young man's face.

"You need not give yourself any anxiety," said the griffin, "about my return to the town. I shall not remain there. Now that I have that admirable likeness of myself in front of my cave, where I can sit at my leisure and gaze upon its noble features and magnificent proportions, I have no wish to see the abode of cowardly and selfish people."

The minor canon, relieved from his fears, lay back, and dropped into a doze; and when he was sound asleep, the griffin took him up and carried him back to the town. He arrived just before daybreak, and putting the young man gently on the grass in the little field where he himself used to rest, the monster, without having been seen by any of the people, flew back to his home.

When the minor canon made his appearance in the morning among the citizens, the enthusiasm and cordiality with which he was received were truly wonderful. He was taken to a house which had been occupied by one of the banished high officers of the place, and everyone was anxious to do all that could be done for his health and comfort. The people crowded into the church when he held services, so that the three old women who used to be his week-day congregation could not get to the best seats, which they had always been in the habit of taking; and the parents of the bad children determined to reform them at home, in order that he might be spared the trouble of keeping up his former school. The minor canon was appointed to the highest office of the old church, and before he died he became a bishop.

During the first years after his return from the dreadful wilds, the people of the town looked up to him as a man to whom they were bound to do honor and reverence. But they often, also, looked up to the

sky to see if there were any signs of the griffin coming back. However, in the course of time they learned to honor and revere their former minor canon without the fear of being punished if they did not do so.

But they need never have been afraid of the griffin. The autumnal equinox came round, and the monster ate nothing. If he could not have the minor canon, he did not care for anything. So, lying down with his eyes fixed upon the great stone griffin, he gradually declined, and died. It was a good thing for some of the people of the town that they did not know this.

If you should ever visit the old town, you would still see the little griffins on the sides of the church, but the great stone griffin that was over the door is gone.

From *The Queen's Museum and Other Fanciful Tales*, by Frank R. Stockton, a volume containing ten stories marked by the subtle humor of this well-known author. Reprinted here by permission of the publishers, Scribner's Sons, New York.



HANS HECKLEMANN'S LUCK

By Howard Pyle

HANS HECKLEMANN had no luck at all. Now and then we hear folks say that they have no luck, but they only mean that their luck is bad and that they are ashamed of it. Everybody but Hans Hecklemann had luck of some kind, either good or bad, and, what is more, everybody carries his luck about with him; some carry it in their pocketbooks, some carry it in their hats, some carry it on their finger tips, and some carry it under their tongues—these are lawyers. Mine is at this moment sitting astride of my pen, though I can no more see it than if it were thin air; whether it is good or bad depends entirely as to how *you* look upon it.

But Hans Hecklemann had no luck at all. How he lost it nobody knows, but it is certain that it was clean gone from him.

He was as poor as charity, and yet his luck was not bad, for, poor as he was, he always had enough for his wife and his family and himself to eat. They all

worked from dawn to nightfall, and yet his luck was not good, for he never laid one penny on top of the other, as the saying is. He had food enough to eat, and clothes enough to wear, so his luck was not indifferent. Now, as it was neither good, bad, nor indifferent, you see that it could have been no luck at all.

Hans Hecklemann's wife was named Catherine. One evening when Hans came into the cottage with just enough money to buy them all bread, and not a cracked farthing to spare, Catherine spoke to him of this matter.

"Hans," said she, "you have no luck at all."

"No," said Hans, "I have not." Which was the truth, as I have already told you.

"What are you going to do about it?" said Catherine.

"Nothing at all," said Hans.

"Doing nothing puts no cabbage into the pot," said Catherine.

"It takes none out," said Hans.

"See, Hans," said Catherine; "go to the old wise woman in the wood and talk to her about it; who knows but that she can tell you how and where you lost your luck?"

"If I should find my luck it might be bad and not good," said Hans.

"It is worth having a look at," said Catherine; "you can leave it where you find it, if it does not please you."

"No," said Hans; "when a man finds his luck he has to take it, whether he likes it or no."

So Hans talked, but he had made up his mind to do as Catherine said, to go and see the old wise woman in the wood. He argued with her, but he only argued with her to let her know how little was her knowledge and how great was his. After he had clearly shown

her how poor her advice was, he took it. Many other men are like Hans Hecklemann.

So, early the next morning, Hans jogged along to the old wise woman's cottage, while the day was sweet and fresh. The hedgerows were covered all over with white blossoms, as though it was with so much snow; the cuckoo was singing among the budding branches, and the little flowers were looking up everywhere with their bright faces. "Surely," said Hans to himself, "if I find my luck on this day, it must be good and not ill."

So he came to the little red cottage at the edge of the wood wherein lived the wise woman who knew many things and one. Hans scraped his feet on the stones until they were clean, and then he knocked at the door.

"Come in," said the old wise woman.

She was as strange an old woman as one could hope to see in a lifetime. Her nose bent down to meet her chin, and her chin bent up to reach her nose; her face was gray with great age, and her hair was as white as snow. She wore a long red cloak over her shoulders, and a great black cat sat on the back of her chair.

"What do you want, Son Hans?" said she.

"I want to find my luck, mother," said Hans.

"Where did you lose it, Son Hans?" said she.

"That I do not know, mother," said Hans.

Then the old wise woman said "Hum-m-m!" in a very thoughtful voice, and Hans said nothing at all.

After a while she spoke again. "Have you enough to eat?" said she.

"Oh, yes!" said Hans.

"Have you enough to drink?" said she.

"Plenty of water, enough of milk, but no beer," said Hans.



"WHAT DO YOU WANT, SON HANS?"



"Have you enough clothes to cover you?" said she.

"Oh, yes!" said Hans.

"Are you warm enough in winter?" said she.

"Oh, yes!" said Hans.

"Then you had better leave well enough alone," said she, "for luck can give you nothing more."

"But it might put money into my pocket," said Hans.

"And it might take away the good things that you already have," said she.

"All the same, I should like to find it again," said Hans. "If I could only lay my hands on it I might make good out of it, even if it is bad."

"I doubt that," said the old wise woman. Nevertheless, she saw that Hans was set in his own way, and that he only talked stiffness into his stubbornness. So she arose from her chair with much groaning, for her joints were stiffened with age, and limping to a closet in the wall she brought a book thence. Then she ran her finger down one page and up another, until she had found that which she sought. When she had found it she spoke:

"Son Hans, you lost your luck three years ago when you were coming from the fair at Kneitlingen. You sat down on the overturned cross that lies where three roads meet, and it fell out of your pocket along with a silver shilling. Now, Hans, your luck was evil, therefore it stuck to the good sign, as all evil things of that kind must, like a fly to butter. Also, I tell you this: when an evil manikin such as this touches the sign of the good cross, he becomes visible to the eyes of everybody who chooses to look upon him. Therefore go to the stone cross and you will find your luck running this way and that, but never able to get away from it." So saying, the old woman shut her book again. Then she arose from her chair and went once more to the

closet in the wall. This time she took from it a little sack woven of black goat's hair. "When you have found your luck again, put it into this little bag," said she; "once in it, no evil imp will be able to get out again so long as you keep the strings tied. And now good-by!"

Then Hans slipped the little sack into his pocket, and set out for the overturned stone cross where the three roads meet. When he had come to the place, he looked here and there, and this way and that, but for a long time he could see nothing at all. At last, after much looking, he beheld a little black beetle running hither and thither on the stone. "I wonder," said Hans, "if this can be my luck."

So saying, he caught the little beetle betwixt his finger and thumb, but very carefully, for he could not tell whether or not it might bite him. The beetle stuck to the stone as though it had been glued there, but, at last, Hans pulled it away; then—lo! it was not a beetle that he held in his hand, but a little manikin about as long as your thumb and as black as ink. Hans Hecklemann was so frightened that he nearly dropped it, for it kicked and screeched and rolled its red eyes in a very ugly way as he held it. However, he popped it into the little sack and pulled the strings tight, and there it was, safe and sound.

That is what Hans Hecklemann's luck was like.

So Hans, having his luck secure in the little sack, began to bargain with it. "What will you do for me if I let you out?" said he.

"Nothing at all," snarled his luck.

"Very well," said Hans, "we will see about that."

So he carried it home with him, and threw sack and all into a nasty pot where Catherine cast the scrapings of the dishes—the fat and what not that she boiled

down into soap now and then. There he left his luck to stay until the next day, and then he went to it again. "What will you do for me if I will let you out now?" said he.

"Nothing at all," snarled his luck.

"Very well," said Hans, "we will see about that." So he let him stay where he was for another day. And so the fiddle played. Every day Hans Hecklemann went to his luck and asked it what it would give him if he would let it out, and every day his luck said nothing; and so a week or more passed.

At last Hans' luck gave in.

"See, Hans," it said one morning. "If you will let me out of this nasty pickle I will give you a thousand thalers."

"Ah no!" said Hans. "Thalers are only thalers, as my good father used to say. They melt away like snow, and then nothing is left of them. I will trust no such luck as that!"

"I will give you two thousand thalers," said his luck.

"Ah no!" said Hans; "two thousand thalers are only twice one thousand thalers. I will trust no such luck as that, either!"

"Then what will you take to let me out, Hans Hecklemann?" said his luck.

"Look," said Hans; "yonder stands my old plough. Now, if you will give me to find a golden noble at the end of every furrow that I strike with it, I will let you out. If not—why, then, into the soap you go."

"Done!" said Hans' luck.

"Done!" said Hans.

Then he opened the mouth of the sack, and—puff! went his luck, like wind out of a bag, and—pop! it slipped into his breeches pocket.

He never saw it again with his mortal eyes, but it

stayed near to him, I can tell you. "Ha! ha! ha!" it laughed in his pocket, "you have made an ill bargain, Hans, I can tell you!"

"Never mind," said Hans, "I am contented."

Hans Hecklemann did not tarry long in trying the new luck of his old plough, as you may easily guess. Off he went like the wind and borrowed Fritz Friedleburg's old gray horse. Then he fastened the horse to the plough and struck the first furrow. When he had come to the end of it—pop! up shot a golden noble, as though someone had spun it up from the ground with his finger and thumb. Hans picked it up, and looked at it and looked at it as though he would swallow it with his eyes. Then he seized the handle of the plough and struck another furrow—pop! up went another golden noble, and Hans gathered it as he had done the other one. So he went on all of that day, striking furrows and gathering golden nobles until all of his pockets were as full as they could hold. When it was too dark to see to plough any more he took Fritz Friedleburg's horse back home again, and then he went home himself.

All of his neighbors thought that he was crazy, for it was nothing but plough, plough, plough, morning and noon and night, spring and summer and autumn. Frost and darkness alone kept him from his labor. His stable was full of fine horses, and he worked them until they dropped in the furrows that he was always ploughing.

"Yes, Hans is crazy," they all said; but when Hans heard them talk in this way he only winked to himself and went on with his ploughing, for he felt that he knew this from that.

But ill luck danced in his pocket with the golden nobles, and from the day that he closed his bargain

with it he was an unhappy man. He had no comfort of living, for it was nothing but work, work, work. He was up and away at his ploughing at the first dawn of day, and he never came home till night had fallen; so, though he ploughed golden nobles, he did not turn up happiness in the furrows along with them. After he had eaten his supper he would sit silently behind the stove, warming his fingers and thinking of some quicker way of doing his ploughing. For it seemed to him that the gold pieces came in very slowly, and he blamed himself that he had not asked his luck to let him turn up three at a time instead of only one at the end of each furrow; so he had no comfort in his gathering wealth. As day followed day he grew thin and haggard and worn, but seven boxes of bright new gold pieces lay hidden in the cellar, of which nobody knew but himself. He told no one how rich he was growing, and all of his neighbors wondered why he did not starve to death.

So you see the ill luck in his breeches pocket had the best of the bargain, after all.

After Hans had gone the way of all men, his heirs found the chests full of gold in the cellar, and there-with they bought fat lands and became noblemen and gentlemen; but that made Hans' luck none the better.

From all this I gather:

That few folks can turn ill luck into good luck.

That the best thing for one to do is to let well enough alone.

That one cannot get happiness as one does cabbages—with money.

That happiness is the only good luck, after all!

From *Pepper and Salt*, by Howard Pyle, a book distinctive for its quaint humor and charming style. Copyrighted by Harper and Brothers, New York, and reprinted by permission.



THE HAPPY PRINCE

By Oscar Wilde

HIGH above the city, on a tall column, stood the statue of the Happy Prince. He was gilded all over with thin leaves of fine gold, for eyes he had two bright sapphires, and a large red ruby glowed on his sword hilt.

He was very much admired indeed. "He is as beautiful as a weathercock," remarked one of the town councilors who wished to gain a reputation for having artistic tastes; "only not quite so useful," he added, fearing lest people should think him unpractical, which he really was not.

"Why can't you be like the Happy Prince?" asked a sensible mother of her little boy who was crying for the moon. "The Happy Prince never dreams of crying for anything."

"I am glad there is someone in the wrold who is quite happy," muttered a disappointed man as he gazed at the wonderful statue.

"He looks just like an angel," said the charity children as they came out of the cathedral in their bright scarlet cloaks and their clean white pinafores.

"How do you know?" said the mathematical master. "You have never seen one."

"Ah! but we have in our dreams," answered the children; and the mathematical master frowned and looked very severe, for he did not approve of children dreaming.

One night there flew over the city a little swallow. His friends had gone away to Egypt six weeks before, but he had stayed behind, for he was in love with the most beautiful reed. He had met her early in the spring as he was flying down the river after a big yellow moth, and had been so attracted by her slender waist that he had stopped to talk to her.

"Shall I love you?" said the swallow, who liked to come to the point at once, and the reed made him a low bow. So he flew around and round her, touching the water with his wings, and making silver ripples. This was his courtship, and it lasted all through the summer.

"It is a ridiculous attachment," twittered the other swallows, "she has no money, and far too many relations." And indeed the river was quite full of reeds. Then, when the autumn came, they all flew away.

After they had gone he felt lonely, and began to tire of his lady love. "She has no conversation," he said, "and I am afraid that she is a coquette, for she is always flirting with the wind." And certainly, whenever the wind blew, the reed made the most graceful curtsies. "I admit that she is domestic," he continued, "but I

love traveling, and my wife, consequently, should love traveling also."

"Will you come away with me?" he said finally to her; but the reed shook her head, she was so attached to her home.

"You have been trifling with me," he cried; "I am off to the Pyramids. Good-by!" and he flew away.

All day long he flew, and at night time he arrived at the city. "Where shall I put up?" he said. "I hope the town has made preparations."

Then he saw the statue on the tall column. "I will put up there," he cried; "it is a fine position with plenty of fresh air." So he alighted just between the feet of the Happy Prince.

"I have a golden bedroom," he said softly to himself as he looked round, and he prepared to go to sleep; but just as he was putting his head under his wing a large drop of water fell on him. "What a curious thing!" he cried. "There is not a single cloud in the sky, the stars are quite clear and bright, and yet it is raining. The climate in the north of Europe is really dreadful. The reed used to like the rain, but that was merely her selfishness."

Then another drop fell.

"What is the use of a statue if it cannot keep the rain off?" he said. "I must look for a good chimney-pot," and he determined to fly away.

But before he had opened his wings a third drop fell, and he looked up, and saw—Ah! what did he see?

The eyes of the Happy Prince were filled with tears, and tears were running down his golden cheeks. His face was so beautiful in the moonlight that the little swallow was filled with pity.

"Who are you?" he said.

"I am the Happy Prince."



THEN HE SAW THE STATUE ON THE TALL COLUMN



"Why are you weeping then?" asked the swallow. "You have quite drenched me."

"When I was alive and had a human heart," answered the statue, "I did not know what tears were, for I lived in the Palace of Sans-Souci, where sorrow is not allowed to enter. In the daytime I played with my companions in the garden, and in the evening I led the dance in the great hall. Round the garden ran a very lofty wall, but I never cared to ask what lay beyond it, everything about me was so beautiful. My courtiers called me the Happy Prince, and happy indeed I was, if pleasure be happiness. So I lived, and so I died. And now that I am dead they have set me up here so high that I can see all the ugliness and all the misery of my city, and though my heart is made of lead yet I cannot choose but weep."

"What, is he not solid gold?" said the swallow to himself. He was too polite to make any personal remarks aloud.

"Far away," continued the statue in a low musical voice, "far away in a little street there is a poor house. One of the windows is open, and through it I can see a woman seated at the table. Her face is thin and worn, and she has coarse, red hands, all pricked by the needle, for she is a seamstress. She is embroidering passion flowers on a satin gown for the loveliest of the queen's maids-of-honor to wear at the next court ball. In a bed in the corner of the room her little boy is lying ill. He has a fever, and is asking for oranges. His mother has nothing to give him but river water, so he is crying. Swallow, swallow, little swallow, will you not bring her the ruby out of my sword hilt? My feet are fastened to this pedestal and I cannot move."

"I am waited for in Egypt," said the swallow. "My friends are flying up and down the Nile, and talking to

the large lotus flowers. Soon they will go to sleep in the tomb of the great king. The king is there himself in his painted coffin. He is wrapped in yellow linen and embalmed with spices. Round his neck is a chain of pale green jade, and his hands are like withered leaves."

"Swallow, swallow, little swallow," said the prince, "will you not stay with me for one night, and be my messenger? The boy is so thirsty and the mother so sad."

"I don't think I like boys," answered the swallow. "Last summer, when I was staying on the river, there were two rude boys, the miller's sons, who were always throwing stones at me. They never hit me, of course; we swallows fly far too well for that, and, besides, I come of a family famous for its agility; but still, it was a mark of disrespect."

But the Happy Prince looked so sad that the little swallow was sorry. "It is very cold here," he said; "but I will stay with you for one night and be your messenger."

"Thank you, little swallow," said the prince.

So the swallow picked out the great ruby from the prince's sword, and flew away with it in his beak over the roofs of the town.

He passed by the cathedral tower, where the white marble angels were sculptured. He passed by the palace and heard the sound of dancing. A beautiful girl came out on the balcony with her lover. "How wonderful the stars are," he said to her, "and how wonderful is the power of love!" "I hope my dress will be ready in time for the state ball," she answered. "I have ordered passion flowers to be embroidered on it; but the seamstresses are so lazy."

He passed over the river, and saw the lanterns hang-

ing to the masts of the ships. He passed over the Ghetto, and saw the old Jews bargaining with each other, and weighing out money in copper scales. At last he came to the poor house and looked in. The boy was tossing feverishly on his bed, and the mother had fallen asleep, she was so tired. In he hopped, and laid the great ruby on the table beside the woman's thimble. Then he flew gently round the bed, fanning the boy's forehead with his wings. "How cool I feel," said the boy; "I must be getting better," and he sank into a delicious slumber.

Then the swallow flew back to the Happy Prince, and told him what he had done. "It is curious," he remarked, "but I feel quite warm now, although it is so cold."

"That is because you have done a good deed," said the prince. And the little swallow began to think, and then he fell asleep. Thinking always made him sleepy.

When day broke he flew down to the river and had a bath. "What a remarkable phenomenon," said the professor of ornithology as he was passing over the bridge. "A swallow in winter!" And he wrote a long letter about it to the local newspaper. Everyone quoted it, it was full of so many words that they could not understand.

"To-night I go to Egypt," said the swallow, and he was in high spirits at the prospect. He visited all the public monuments, and sat a long time on top of the church steeple. Wherever he went sparrows chirruped, and said to each other, "What a distinguished stranger!" so he enjoyed himself very much.

When the moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince. "Have you any commissions for Egypt?" he cried. "I am just starting."

"Swallow, swallow, little swallow," said the prince, "will you not stay with me one night longer?"

"I am waited for in Egypt," answered the swallow. "To-morrow my friends will fly up to the Second Cataract. The river horse couches there among the bulrushes, and on a great granite throne sits the God Memnon. All night long he watches the stars, and when the morning star shines he utters one cry of joy, and then he is silent. At noon the yellow lions come down to the water's edge to drink. They have eyes like green beryls, and their roar is louder than the roar of the cataract."

"Swallow, swallow, little swallow," said the prince, "far away across the city I see a young man in a garret. He is leaning over a desk covered with papers, and in a tumbler by his side there is a bunch of withered violets. His hair is brown and crisp, and his lips are red as pomegranate, and he has large dreamy eyes. He is trying to finish a play for the director of the theater, but he is too cold to write any more. There is no fire in the grate, and hunger has made him faint."

"I will wait with you one night longer," said the swallow, who really had a good heart. "Shall I take him another ruby?"

"Alas! I have no ruby now," said the prince; "my eyes are all that I have left. They are made of rare sapphires, which were brought out of India a thousand years ago. Pluck out one of them and take it to him. He will sell it to the jeweler, and buy food and firewood, and finish his play."

"Dear prince," said the swallow, "I cannot do that," and he began to weep.

"Swallow, swallow, little swallow," said the prince, "do as I command you."

So the swallow plucked out the prince's eye, and

flew away to the student's garret. It was easy enough to get in, as there was a hole in the roof. Through this he darted, and came into the room. The young man had his head buried in his hands, so he did not hear the flutter of the bird's wings, and when he looked up he found the beautiful sapphire lying on the withered violets.

"I am beginning to be appreciated," he cried; "this is from some great admirer. Now I can finish my play," and he looked quite happy.

The next day the swallow flew down to the harbor. He sat on the mast of a large vessel and watched the sailors hauling big chests out of the hold with ropes. "Heave ahoy!" they shouted as each chest came up. "I am going to Egypt!" cried the swallow, but nobody minded, and when the moon rose he flew back to the Happy Prince.

"I am come to bid you good-by," he cried.

"Swallow, swallow, little swallow," said the prince, "you will not stay with me one night longer?"

"It is winter," answered the swallow, "and the chill snow will soon be here. In Egypt the sun is warm on the green palm trees, and the crocodiles lie in the mud and look lazily about them. My companions are building a nest in the Temple of Baalbek, and the pink and white doves are watching them, and cooing to each other. Dear prince, I must leave you, but I will never forget you, and next spring I will bring you back two beautiful jewels in place of those you have given away. The ruby shall be redder than a red rose, and the sapphire shall be as blue as the great sea."

"In the square below," said the Happy Prince, "there stands a little match-girl. She has let her matches fall into the gutter, and they are all spoiled. Her father will beat her if she does not bring home some money

and she is crying. She has no shoes or stockings, and her little head is bare. Pluck out my other eye, and give it to her, and her father will not beat her."

"I will stay with you one night longer," said the swallow, "but I cannot pluck out your eye. You would be quite blind then."

"Swallow, swallow, little swallow," said the prince, "do as I command you."

So he plucked out the prince's other eye and darted down with it. He swooped past the match-girl, and slipped the jewel into the palm of her hand. "What a lovely bit of glass," cried the little girl, and she ran home, laughing.

Then the swallow came back to the prince. "You are blind now," he said, "so I will stay with you always."

"No, little swallow," said the poor prince, "you must go away to Egypt."

"I will stay with you always," said the swallow, and he slept at the prince's feet.

All the next day he sat on the prince's shoulder, and told him stories of what he had seen in strange lands. He told him of the red ibises, who stand in long rows on the banks of the Nile and catch goldfish in their beaks; of the Sphinx, who is as old as the world itself, and lives in the desert, and knows everything; of the merchants, who walk slowly by the side of their camels, and carry amber beads in their hands; of the king of the Mountains of the Moon, who is as black as ebony, and worships a large crystal; of the great green snake that sleeps in a palm tree, and has twenty priests to feed it with honeycakes, and of the pygmies who sail over a big lake on large flat leaves, and are always at war with the butterflies.

"Dear little swallow," said the prince, "you tell me

of marvelous things, but more marvelous than anything is the suffering of men and women. There is no mystery so great as misery. Fly over my city, little swallow, and tell me what you see there."

So the swallow flew over the great city, and saw the rich making merry in their beautiful houses, while the beggars were sitting at the gates. He flew into dark lanes, and saw the white faces of starving children looking out listlessly at the black streets. Under the archway of a bridge two little boys were lying in one another's arms to try to keep themselves warm. "How hungry we are!" they said. "You must not lie here," shouted the watchman, and they wandered out into the rain.

Then he flew back and told the prince what he had seen.

"I am covered with fine gold," said the prince; "you must take it off leaf by leaf, and give it to my poor; the living always think that gold can make them happy."

Leaf after leaf of the fine gold the swallow picked off, till the Happy Prince looked quite dull and gray. Leaf after leaf of the fine gold he brought to the poor, and the children's faces grew rosier, and they laughed and played games in the streets. "We have bread now!" they cried.

Then the snow came, and after the snow, came the frost. The streets looked as if they were made of silver, they were so bright and glistening; long icicles like crystal daggers hung down from the eaves of the houses, everybody went about in furs, and the little boys wore scarlet caps and skated on the ice.

The poor little swallow grew colder and colder, but he would not leave the prince; he loved him too well. He picked up crumbs outside the baker's door when the

baker was not looking, and tried to keep himself warm by flapping his wings.

But at last he knew that he was going to die. He had just strength to fly up to the prince's shoulder once more. "Good-by, dear prince!" he murmured. "Will you let me kiss your hand?"

"I am glad that you are going to Egypt at last, little swallow," said the prince, "you have stayed too long here; but you must kiss me on the lips, for I love you."

"It is not to Egypt that I am going," said the swallow. "I am going to the house of death. Death is the brother of sleep, is he not?"

And he kissed the Happy Prince on the lips, and fell down dead at his feet.

At that moment a curious crack sounded inside the statue as if something had broken. The fact is that the leaden heart had snapped right in two. It certainly was a dreadfully hard frost.

Early the next morning the mayor was walking in the square below in company with the town councilors. As they passed the column he looked up at the statue. "Dear me! how shabby the Happy Prince looks!" he said.

"How shabby indeed!" cried the town councilors, who always agreed with the mayor, and they went up to look at it.

"The ruby has fallen out of his sword, his eyes are gone, and he is golden no longer," said the mayor; "in fact, he is little better than a beggar!"

"Little better than a beggar," said the town councilors.

"And here is actually a dead bird at his feet!" continued the mayor. "We must really issue a proclamation that birds are not to be allowed to die here." And the town clerk made a note of the suggestion.

So they pulled down the statue of the Happy Prince. "As he is no longer beautiful he is no longer useful," said the art professor at the university.

Then they melted the statue in a furnace, and the mayor held a meeting of the corporation to decide what was to be done with the metal. "We must have another statue, of course," he said, "and it shall be a statue of myself."

"Of myself," said each of the town councilors, and they quarreled. When I last heard of them they were quarreling still.

"What a strange thing!" said the overseer of the workmen at the foundry. "This broken lead heart will not melt in the furnace. We must throw it away." So they threw it on a dust heap where the dead swallow was also lying.

"Bring me the two most precious things in the city," said God to one of His angels; and the angel brought Him the leaden heart and the dead bird.

"You have rightly chosen," said God, "for in my garden of Paradise this little bird shall sing forevermore, and in my city of gold the Happy Prince shall praise me."

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KNOONIE IN THE SLEEPING PALACE

By Laurence Housman

JUST when the palace fell into its deep sleep, the porter's son had run out to follow a swarm of bees which had flown over the fishponds into the woods lying outside the royal demesne. In the very minute after he had climbed the wood pales, to the time when the shifty swarm came swinging its long bright tangle for home, calling on him to retrace his pursuit, sleep had clapped down like a great eyelid over the whole palace.

Knoonie made a clear leap over the palings into the royal clover, and then felt something hurting his heart. He could not know what or why, very strange, very frightening; it was like waking up all alone in the middle of a dark night, and feeling that something was standing quite still in the silence before him—quite still, because he himself had moved. He took one step forward, and at that sprang aside as if a snake were under him; his foot had made no sound in the clover! Then, thinking his ears must have deceived him, he tried once more. Ah! now it was so frightful that his courage went utterly. "Help, help!" he cried with all the force of his lungs, but his voice gave no sound. The dead silence that weighed on his struggles to cry, drove him wild with terror.

He set off running as if death were after him, running like a blind thing; and knew nothing more

till he fell half-stunned and bleeding into the gateway of the palace courtyard.

He sprang, and tapped with his hand on the porter's wicket. "Father, dear father, open quick!" he cried. But the words fell mute, and the wicket did not open. Then he began beating with his fists on the bronze panels, and, seizing hold of the knocker, battered for dear life. For dear life! But dear reason almost died in the attempt. The great bronze knocker beat without making a sound. He stopped his ears with his fingers to get rid of the stillness which was so terrible, and then at last he began to think that while in the wood he must have gone stone deaf. But he was frightened; though he was deaf, others surely should hear him. Again he beat and beat upon the knocker, throwing his whole weight upon it, and cried for his father to come to him.

Surely somebody must come. No, all was quite still as well as silent. Nothing moved; everywhere it was the same. There was a sentry on guard over the gate: Knoonie could see his helmet and the top of his halberd shining in the sun. He cried to him to come down and let him in, but the man stood so still that he began to think he must truly have lost the power of speech as well as of hearing. He stooped down, and taking up a stone, threw it at the soldier to make him turn round. Moving away from the wall so as to get a better aim, he was able to see more of him. The sentry stood very strangely; he must be asleep or sunstruck, for a small green paroquet had come and perched on his shoulder.

The fifth stone Knoonie threw (for fear had made his hand tremble) hit the soldier on the head, and yet he did not wake up, and the strange little paroquet remained as if stuffed and glued to its perch.

Then Knoonie, casting his eyes around for any-

thing to help, saw a new sight. All down the broad avenues of the park a movement was taking place from the earth upwards. It came nearer and nearer. It was like a green army on the march. It waved long prickly spears and many-pointed crests, and sent green things like lizards swarming into the high trees that stood in its way. Up and up, closer and higher to the very gates of the palace it came—a wall of thistles, magic in strength and stature, overranked by beetling heads of hemlock, and underrun by long snaky loops of bramble, that writhed in and out of the earth like huge worms.

"I must be dreaming!" thought Knoonie for a way out of his distress. "It's all one horrid dream which will come to an end just as the worst thing happens." But the giant thistles came crowding close, reaching hungry hands at him. He caught hold of the knocker, and dragging himself up was able in his terror to force open the wicket, and work his small body through, just as the first thistle caught him by the leg. He escaped shoeless and with all his hose torn into ribands from the knee. Inside he came upon his father, sitting in his accustomed niche, keys in hand, sitting quite still with head bent and closed eyes.

The child began to tremble and cry. He forgot any longer to think it was a dream. A remembrance like the touch of dead lips chilled his heart—the remembrance that while his father had been sitting there almost within reach of his hand, he, Knoonie, had cried and beaten with all his force upon the door, and had not been heard. He threw his arms round his father's neck, and clinging close to the dear face he loved: "Father, father," he cried, "wake!" But his words had no sound, and the porter made no sound or stir.

Dead, dead! Knoonie threw up his hands, and try-

ing vainly to utter one call for help, darted into the palace.

After a long time, he came out again with a white face, looking dazed into the sunlight. What was it he had seen in there? Beautiful lords and ladies, still as death, smiling and bending over golden plates and half-tasted wine; serving men who stood upright and still as death, carrying dishes and tilting out the wine into great tankards; and, over all, the yellow sunlight streaming in.

He ran tottering over the marble pavement, as fast as fear would send him, to get away out of the palace and fetch help for all these dead or dying people—for there must still be somebody left somewhere. But when he came to the porter's lodge, there was a sight in the wicket that stopped him: the small square aperture was bulged through by thistle and bramble, in the midst of which his little shoe hung trussed and skewered; the hard grasp of the thistles had bent it out of shape, and the thorns of the bramble had cut into the leather like the steel teeth of a trap. Looking through, he could see nothing but one dense forest of thistles, made the more impassable by a thick mesh of creepers that clung about their stems. He climbed up onto the walls. Everywhere was the same, those death's heads of hemlock had grown higher than the trees of the park, and threw their shadows over the whole palace.

Slowly, the meaning of the horror which had first been so impossible for his mind to take in grew clear to his imagination. The sleeping palace, that whispered tale of his childhood, was embodied before him, and of all those who had heard it told, and laughed it lightly away because every day brought sameness of life to each sense, he alone was left awake to drink the

full cup of this sleep of doom. He alone, amid others unconscious of their arrested life, with all the ways of knowledge closed from him by an overwhelming silence, he and he only must live and move, and endure this living tomb, till the prince rescuer should come, of whom the same tale gave promise. The great palace where he had been such a little thing at everybody's beck and call, one for the grooms to tease, and for maids and serving men to harry, was his own possession now, to do in what he would. But no joy came to him with this growing sense of a strange liberty. He went from place to place, tiptoeing at first, hardly daring to enter those grand chambers where the king and his great lords were sitting in state; but the lords-in-waiting stood making way for him with closed eyes, and he might see and touch and taste whatever he chose.

He went and stood behind great ladies, and stroked their shining hair, and touched their white wondrous throats, and the strong hands of the knights, the king's even, with its gold signet ring; but there was no joy in any of these things. And when hunger came on him, he put out his hand and helped himself from the king's plate; yet though he had tasted no such delicacies in his life before, they gave him no pleasure now. He looked at all the beautiful ladies with their sweet-smiling lips, and remembered how he had thought that to be kissed by them would be almost death, so great must be the delight. Now he climbed up to the sweetest of them all, and tried to imagine her as the mother he had never known; yet when he kissed, and saw how the lips went smiling on, it was such bitterness that the tears burst from his eyes, and fell into the velvet lap of her dress. He caught up a napkin, "For when she wakes up she will see what a mess I have

made and be angry," he thought. Then he remembered the hundred years, and cried still more.

At last, when it began to get dark, weary with sorrow, and drawn thither by a growing fear of his loneliness, he went back to the gate, and there, kissing him, lay down with his head on his father's knee, and clinging to the hand that had hold of the keys of the prison, wept himself to sleep. Ah! how happy would he be if sleep would join his lot to theirs, and his eyes never open again till the whole day of deliverance was come. Alas! that the bees should have led him beyond reach of the charm which would have brought sleep, and only back to be enclosed in the impenetrable embrace of that thorny fastness.

The next day's sun shone down and opened Knoonie's eyes, and he rose up into the life-long silence that encompassed him; and, kissing his father's face, went forth into the joyless splendors of his prison-house.

This day he climbed all the towers, and strained his eyes for a glimpse of the great unsleeping world beyond. But high and far the forest of thorns had stretched itself, and he could only see here and there the blue of the most distant hills through gaps of thicket.

Then he went down, and sought out all his old acquaintances, the stable boys who played with him, the grooms who bullied, and the maids who teased. He came face to face with the terrible head-cook, who had so many times threatened to beat him to a jelly. Now Knoonie could have boxed the tyrant's head off, and no hand would be there to stay him; but he only stood and looked at the big grim face and the closed eyes, and longed hungrily for a blow from that coarse red fist.

He went on to the stables, and now who was there

to forbid him his heart's desire to climb on to the back of the king's great charger, who stood sleeping with beautifully arched neck. Yet when he had clambered his way up by the manger, it was no pride to him to be there; he only bowed his face down into the black mane and wept.

That same day he found the princess sleeping in her chamber. Oh! so beautiful she was with her little white hand laid on the spinning wheel, a small prick of scarlet showing on the delicate skin. So beautiful she was, he dared not kiss her yet, for he did not know that anyone who could gain entrance into the sleeping palace, could by kissing the princess break the charm and win her for his bride. Already more than one brave knight had entered that vast forest of thorns and had thrown away his life in striving to reach those lips which were Knoonie's for a little stooping. But he was a child and he did not understand.

The days went by, the weeks went by, and the child fell in with ever deepening sadness to the loneliness of his environment. His wistful face grew beautiful and pure in all that still air, and the picture of courtly life that encircled his, lent him an unconscious grace. Yet he stayed humble and sad, and every night, leaving beds of down and pillows of lace untouched, went back to kiss his father's face and lie with his head on his knee. As for food, that great palace held stores which would suffice him through many lives, and during the magic sleep nothing changed or decayed. Even the milk stayed fresh through the many years to come—a hundred shining pails of it standing in the king's dairy.

The weeks, the months, even the years went by, but the child forgot the passing of time. Though less and less of a child, he retained the child's heart still, lonely and sad, with a child's will and brain, with the memory

of its childish prattle dying away, and no words or thoughts of a growing man to take its place. And amid that sleep of dreamless men, where even the thought of evil did not enter, his heart was left to him, gentle, simple, and pure.

Every night at his father's knee Knoonie knelt and said his evening prayer, and slept well, with the porter's hand in his. Years made his body fair and of a slender strength, and through the deep silence he grew tall. And he would go and look at the sweet-faced women, and wonder why he sighed, and why it was so sad to kiss their lips that smiled and yet cared nothing—so sad that as years went on he ceased from that which seemed to put a double silence on his life, the pain being too keen for his heart. And then he would go and look at the princess whose lips he had never kissed, and that seemed the saddest thing of all.

Still years went on, and his mild mute life bore him very slowly on to age. Still night by night, a young man once, and then a man in his full prime, and then a man beginning to bend down with age, he went and said his childish prayer, and kissed his father's knee.

Very gently had life cradled him to age when a hundred years came round. He had lost all knowledge or thought of speech, save that one form of daily use, and his silver-gray face was a reflection of the spirit that brooded over the sleeping palace.

The great day came when all the palace clocks, and the sounds of speech and laughter woke back to life. The thorns and thistles had disappeared, dropping a child's shoe for luck over the palace threshold: the prince had come and broken the spell. The cook was screaming that a hundred cats had been at the cream.

In a far-off corner of the palace Knoonie heard, and knew what these sounds meant, and his heart trembled

for joy. It was so very terrible! To him the pain, the bewilderment, the multitude of sights and sounds made this renewed life an agony past knowing. He was so giddy he could only creep hand over hand along the wall toward the gate where his father sat. Now his one thought was to see his father.

As he came under the archway, the porter took him by the shoulder roughly, and turned him out-of-doors. "We want no naked old mendicants here."

Knoonie found no words to say; he just walked on and on, a beautiful bowed-down old man, bespoken of none, until one night he knocked at a doorway in fairyland, and there he found contentment and a home.

From *A Doorway in Fairyland*, a group of twelve artistic stories by Laurence Housman; reprinted here by special arrangement with the publishers, Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York.



PETER AND THE WITCH OF THE WOOD

By Anna Wahlenberg

IN a little gray hut at the edge of a wood, lived Mother Stine and her boy who was called Peter. Mother Stine got up every morning at four o'clock and cut birch twigs and made brooms, which she sold in the city. But Peter lay in his bed until seven, and when he arose wandered about the wood the whole day, except of course when he came home to eat the meal with which his mother had drudged and slaved to provide him. Yet he could well have earned his own bread; for he was a tall youth of seventeen, and big and strong and capable.

But he was an odd sort of fellow; and when he looked at himself in the dim little mirror which lay upon the chest of drawers, he felt it was really a sin that so good-looking a chap should spoil his beauty and his fine hands with working in field and meadow. Therefore he didn't attempt it, but set about hoping that something wonderful might happen to him. He had heard from the old gamekeeper, whom he had met upon his wanderings, that once in a while

remarkable happenings occurred in that neighborhood.

The gamekeeper had even warned him with uplifted finger, and said, "Look out, Peter—look out always for the witch of the wood."

But at the same time he told Peter many things about her which were altogether tempting. Young men, especially fine-looking and attractive ones like Peter—and with a twinkle in the eye—had met with the witch of the wood, both in his father's and his grandfather's time. The witch was well disposed toward such youths who roamed about in the wood and did nothing worth while; and if she could get power over them and make them commit some evil or other, she would later on help them to attain honor and riches in the world.

There was, however, one small penalty attached; it could be known when they had done some evil thing. They could no longer look up frankly. But that did not matter so much after all, for they could wear blue spectacles.

So Peter dwelt on what the gamekeeper had said, and wondered how he could manage to see the witch of the wood! And he thought long upon how to get honor and riches by committing only some small crime. One could easily do good again when one had attained to power and happiness.

"What does the witch of the wood look like?" he asked the gamekeeper one day when they met in the forest.

The old man's face wore a queer look as he answered, "She appears different to different people. Some say she is fair as the day, and others that she is ugly as sin. It seems she can assume any shape with which to dazzle one's eyes."

"I should think it would be rather amusing to meet her," said Peter.

"But I think it would be still more amusing if you went and did some work, so your mother would not have to wear herself out to find bread for two," said the gamekeeper, and then he went on his way. He could not put up with such great loafers who let other people feed and clothe them.

Peter looked angrily after him. What business was it of his or of anyone's how he lived his life, or what he did or did not do!

And furthermore his mother did not complain about him. She had of course observed with pleasure that he did not do any work; she understood perfectly well that so imposing and handsome a fellow as he could not be expected to do it. And finally she had moaned enough over what would happen when she was no longer able to slave and wear herself out, though the last time she had been rather more quiet about it. Year after year she had skimped and saved, never treating herself to a bit of butter at meals, and never buying any new clothes, until at last she had saved for herself a large silver coin. And she skimped and saved through other years until the silver piece had turned into a little gold piece; and now in this present year the gold piece was so great it was equal to a whole handful of silver money. She wore it on her breast both night and day, in a little leather bag, so no one should steal it from her; it was her joy and comfort—the dearest thing she owned after Peter; for it would help her, she said, when she could no longer see the way to help herself. If she were ill, there would be something to fall back upon; if she died, it would give her a decent burial, and Peter would have spending money when he was obliged to go out in the wide world. She was well con-

tent with the thought of her treasure, but drudged and slaved on, just so she might have an excuse for grumbling over her fate.

"No, with mother there is no need for all this," thought Peter; and he now wished more than ever that something lucky might befall him, when things would be still better for her.

But the luck he talked about let him wait a long time; and no matter how eagerly he sought after the witch of the wood, in crevices of mountains or behind the trunks of trees, she would not show herself.

Then it happened one evening, about the time the sun was sinking back of the tree tops, and he was on his way home, that he heard a strange sound. From a thicket of bushes by the road there came a deep sob.

"Who is it?" he called. At first everything was still; but soon another sob was heard, as though it came from some grief-stricken woman.

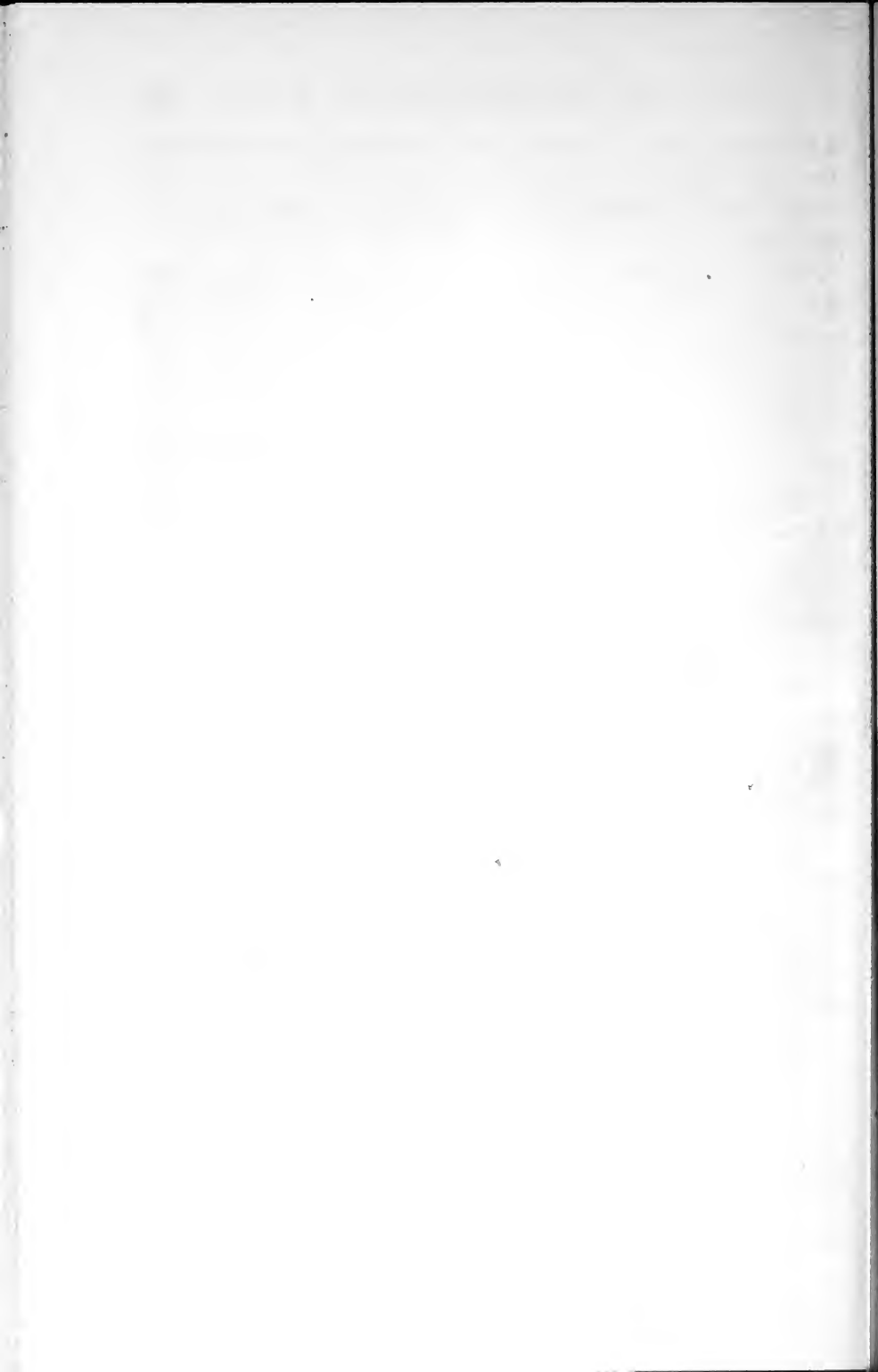
Peter pushed aside the branches, and then his eyes discovered a woman's form, seated upon a tree stump in the midst of the thicket. And she was so wonderful to look upon that his very heart began to throb. It might easily, he thought, prove to be the witch of the wood.

She was attired in a green-gold garment which fell lightly about her graceful, slender figure, while from the skirt's pleats and folds peeped out vine branches and clusters of flowers, as though they grew from the clothing itself. Her black hair, waving softly about her, was half concealed by a thin gold veil, which was wrapped about her head and hung down over breast and shoulders. But her pretty white arms were bare, and these she reached out to Peter who, hesitating and half-frightened, drew back.

"It is well you have come at last," she said, rising



THE WITCH WOULD NOT SHOW HERSELF



at the same time. Supple as a lizard she glided through the opening in the thicket and stood before him on the road, her bright black eyes gleaming at him through the veil.

"Year in and year out I have waited for you," said she. "I have stood back of trees when you went by, I have swung in the branches over your head. But you never noticed me—and to-day for the first time you have heard my sobs."

"Why are you weeping?" asked Peter, still cautiously keeping his distance.

"Look," and she raised her left arm on which was a bracelet representing a snake with golden scales and green eyes; and Peter saw that from the serpent's neck hung an almost invisible chain, thin as a thread, which lost itself in the ground where she had been sitting.

When she saw his astonished glance, she pulled the chain up more and more into her hand, and then let it fall in greater and greater circles at her feet. But for all that it looked as though it would never come to an end.

"Farther than the chain reaches I cannot go," said she. "The witch of the wood holds the other end in her hand, where she sits by the spring back of the mountain's crest."

"Are you not yourself the witch of the wood?" asked Peter.

"No," she answered, and then shook her head sorrowfully. "I am a princess from a kingdom far from here. The witch of the wood stole me when I was only a little girl and took me away with her, and since then I have been her prisoner. And she has drawn the enchanted veil so tightly over my head that I cannot get it off, for she is afraid someone might get

the chance to see how pretty I am—and perhaps feel so kindly toward me that he would set me free.”

The poor little princess! He now understood why she sobbed, and why at this present moment she was sobbing more bitterly than before. She must be very pretty, from the glimpse he could catch through the veil. But indeed he would help her whether she was pretty or ugly. And therewith he straightened himself up, extended the muscles of his arms, and gave a quick strong tug at the chain in his effort to break it. But it was not so easy as he thought. The fine thin links cut deep into his flesh, but would not break. And the princess actually laughed a little at him—almost as though she considered him a fool for having attempted anything so impossible.

It made him furious. “Only just let me find the witch of the wood,” he said, “and I will pull the chain from her with such force that she will stand on her nose and turn seven somersaults!”

The princess beckoned to him and then glided in among the trees. She rather floated than went, and the train of her green-gold skirt twisted itself about like a snake over the stones and roots of trees.

When they had come to the brow of the mountain they descended into a valley; and there among rough stones and gleaming birches lay the spring, like a shining eye wherein the clear blue heaven was reflected.

“Now you see how it is!” said the little princess who stood upon a stone and pointed to the chain. And Peter saw she had spoken the truth. The chain went directly down into the clear spring.

“Well, if one cannot manage to break it from above, one can haul it in,” he thought, and immediately took hold of it. But after much tugging he again found he must give it up. He pulled so hard he was black and



IT MIGHT EASILY BE THE WITCH OF THE WOOD



blue with the effort; he pulled so hard that drops of sweat trickled from his forehead, and as he worked at the chain, again and again he heard smothered laughter from the princess.

"It's of no use," she finally said. "Stoop down on your knee and look into the water, so you can see the ugly witch who stands below and holds the chain. But do not be afraid."

Peter did as she said—and dismal indeed was the sight that met him in the water. The ill-favored and sallow face of a woman grinned up at him, with a mouth like an empty chasm and burning black eyes like deep dark holes. And this face was wound around with a veil which exactly matched that of the little princess; and the arm and outstretched hand which held the chain were pretty and white like hers.

Could it be her reflected image?

Involuntarily he glanced about him, but there stood the woman with the veil over her face just as before. Then he began again to tug at the chain with all his might, while the face below grinned up at him even more fiendishly than before. But every attempt proved useless, and at last he fell over backwards from the exertion.

The princess bent over him. "Come," she whispered, and drew him with her to an overturned tree trunk, on which they sat down.

If he really wished to help her, she said, she would tell him just what to do, and then she began to pat and stroke his hand. It was only necessary to provide himself with some one thing or another that would appeal to the witch of the wood, and when he threw it into her open mouth she would be so overcome with joy that she would forget the chain and let it slip out of her hand.

"What is it that would especially please her?" asked Peter.

The little princess stroked his hand even more affectionately, and then asked him if there was any one thing in the world which meant more to him than all else. And Peter did not take long to think about it; "Yes, my mother," he answered.

"Now try to remember; does she own any precious object upon which her whole heart hangs?"

"Yes," said Peter, "a gold piece, which she always wears upon her breast."

"That's just the very thing! You shall take it, and throw it into the mouth of the witch of the wood."

His mother's dear gold coin—which she was more afraid of losing than her own life! And this was to be taken from her and thrown to the witch of the wood!

"I'll do nothing of the sort," said he. Then the little princess put her hands before her face and sobbed aloud. Now she would never be free, she declared, for the witch of the wood would never loosen the chain unless she received a human being's dearest possession, stolen from that person by the one loved best. Such a gift savored of a bleeding human heart, and was the sort the witch of the wood liked best. If Peter had been willing to get this, the little princess would then have been free, and she would have led Peter to her father the king, and he would have rewarded him so handsomely that he could have made good to his mother—a thousand times over—the loss of the miserable gold piece. But he wouldn't help her, and so all must remain as it was.

Yet more loudly the little princess sobbed, and yet more confused in his mind grew Peter. Really, when one thought it over calmly, perhaps it was stupid to let luck thus slip out of his hands by not causing his

mother just a little sorrow, which would be soon forgotten. And then also it was a great pity about the poor little princess!

"I really do not see, after all, why I should not take the coin," he concluded on thinking it over.

Hearing this, the princess at once stopped crying, slipped her arm through his, and began to explain how it could be done. At night, when his mother was sound asleep, he should get up and cut the string which held the bag with the gold coin. After that it would be the easiest thing in the world to possess himself of it, sneak out, and come straight to the spring in the wood. She would wait for him, the moon would shed light for them, and when she was free they could go out in the world together and be happy.

The girl's breath felt like a puff of gentle summer wind against his cheek, and her voice was so soft and insinuating that at last he felt what she advised him to do was really best both for himself and his mother.

"All right—we'll let it go at that!" said he, and gave the little princess his hand upon it.

She was so delighted that she jumped up and danced twice around the tree trunk on which they had been sitting. Then she straightway followed him to the border of the wood, and when they parted she promised to come and wake him in the night by knocking on the window pane. So far but no farther stretched her chain.

When Peter reached home he found his mother in bed. The old woman had been up so early, in the cold morning air, and then had stood so long in the draughty market place, that when she came home she was shaking with the cold in her thin clothes. And now she was ill. She could scarcely move—only lay and moaned.

All this came at a most dreadfully inconvenient time! It was not a pleasant thing to be forced to do what had been planned, now that his mother was ill. And so he decided to put the matter off until another day. He made up the bed for his mother as well as he could, and then went to his own rest.

But in the night he was aroused by a knock on the window pane close by his bed, and when he raised his head he saw that the moonlight flowed like a broad stream into his room, and that the little princess stood outside in her shining golden veil.

Peter opened the window. "Mother, alas, is ill, so we must wait until another time," said he.

"Another time is no time," she answered. "Your mother might die, and then the coin would no longer be worth anything. It must be taken from a living person, and not a dead one."

"Oh no, no, I cannot do it," sobbed Peter, who had suddenly realized how good and kind his mother had always been to him.

Then the girl stamped on the ground with anger. If he would not do at once what he had promised she would go away and never come back. For there was no difficulty in getting hold of that coin. If his mother should wake, all he need say was that he had to have it to buy medicine for her.

With this she gave him a push, and Peter felt there was nothing more to do but go to his mother's bed, take the penknife from his pocket, and feel around after the cord upon the invalid's neck. He got hold of this cord, but when he went to cut it his mother turned over in bed.

"Is that you up again, and straightening the covers for me, my boy," she said. "How good and kind you are to your sick mother."

At that moment he felt the cord from which the coin hung was loose, but he could not find out where the gold piece had slipped.

So Peter was obliged to tell his mother that it was necessary to have money with which to buy medicine.

"Medicine?—no, most certainly not. The gold coin will be needed for a coffin, and for spending money for my Peter when he shall go out in the wide world." And with that she pressed her treasure close to her breast and, though she writhed with pain, held on to it stubbornly with her wrinkled fingers, and finally she slept, without the treasure slipping from her grasp.

Then Peter heard his name whispered from the open window, and there the girl stood again, with her arms upon the sill. She held out to him between her two fingers a small flat stone.

"Now you can pull out the bag," she said when Peter came to her, "take the gold piece from it, and lay in its stead this coin, which is so much of the same size that your mother will notice nothing."

Peter paused. He felt there was something hideous in the very suggestion; but the princess began again on how happy they would be when he had secured the gold piece, and she was free. So Peter thought over the matter for the second time.

Then softly he crept back to his mother's bed, and cautiously felt around for the bag, which he soon found, for sleep had let it slip from the wrinkled fingers. The next moment the coin was replaced by the flat stone, and the bag lay again upon his mother's breast.

Once more she woke, and gazed upon him. "My own dear boy," said she, "I feel I am going to die, and as I lay here I have thought it best you should take my gold piece first as last. But buy no expensive coffin

for me, Peter, only a neat one, with a little white pillow in it. You will have more need of the money yourself when you go out into the world."

With that she held out the bag to Peter. But Peter felt as though he could not move.

"Take it, nevertheless, Peter, take it," persisted his mother. "And when the gold piece is gone, still keep the bag; and when you look upon it remember your old mother, who always thought about you whenever she put anything in it. Take it now, Peter, and come and kiss me."

Peter bent down quickly, and took the bag from her hand; but instead of kissing her he went to the window where the girl stood and beckoned him. He was overcome with shame for what he had done, and when he saw the eager outstretched fingers a great anger seized him.

"You shall have this, since you would delude me into cheating my own mother," he hissed between his teeth. And at the same moment he flung the bag in the girl's face. Her veil was torn by the stone, and through the rent could be seen an ugly sallow face, with a yawning cavern for a mouth and two black holes for eyes—exactly like the face he had seen in the spring behind the mountain's crest. It was indeed the witch of the wood; and it was she who had let herself be mirrored in the water—being quick enough to deceive him as she pulled her veil up and down.

Scarcely had he realized this before she, snorting and foaming like some wild creature, threw herself at him as though to grab him in her arms. But the chain was too short. She could not reach him. And when Peter took up a pail of water and threw it all over her, she turned away and then vanished like a gray mist.

"It must be frightful weather to-night," said Peter's mother, to whom all this performance had sounded like hail and storm.

But Peter made a new bag for the gold piece, and hung it about his mother's neck.

"You shall have your coin again, mother," said he, "for it cannot be the truth that you are to die now. I shall nurse you, and hereafter I shall work for you, and you shall have it easy all the rest of your life."

Then the old woman began to cry for joy, because she had never heard Peter talk like this before—and out of pure curiosity to see if afterwards he would keep his word, she was actually better the next day!

And to her joy he did what he had promised. At the time the reapers were in the field the following morning, he had slung his scythe over his shoulder and had gone to compete with the men in the town. Never any more did his mother have to stand in the market place and sell brooms. They certainly were not rich, but they did well; and the next time Peter met the game-keeper he was patted kindly by him on the shoulder.

"You have certainly got good eyes, Peter," said he. "At one time it looked as though you would soon have to wear blue spectacles. But now your glance is open and frank, and there is an air of contentment about you."

The witch of the wood hardly felt the same way. Because, no matter how often Peter went through the wood, he never again saw so much as the hem of her green-gold gown.

One of the eighteen stories in *Old Swedish Fairy Tales*, characterized by a "veiled wisdom and amusing absurdity." Written by Anna Wahlenberg and translated into English by Antoinette De Coursey Patterson; copyright 1923 by the Penn Publishing Company, Philadelphia, and reprinted by permission.



THE SHEPHERD PACHA

By Edouard Laboulaye

ONCE upon a time there lived at Bagdad a pacha who was greatly beloved by the sultan, and greatly dreaded by his people. Ali, for this was the name of our friend, was a true Mussulman, a Turk of the old school. As soon as the dawn of day permitted him to distinguish a black thread from a white one, he spread a carpet on the ground and, his face turned toward Mecca, piously went through with his ablutions and prayers. His devotions finished, two negro slaves, dressed in scarlet, brought him his pipe and coffee, when he settled himself on the divan, with his legs crossed, and remained thus all day long. To sip black, bitter, and scalding mocha, smoke Smyrna tobacco slowly through a long nargile, sleep, do nothing, and think less, such was his fashion of governing. Every month, it is true, an order came from Stamboul requiring him to send to the imperial treasury a million of piasters, the taxes of the pachalic. The good Ali, departing from his usual quiet, then summoned before him the richest merchants of Bagdad, and politely

asked them for two millions of piasters. The poor men raised their hands to heaven, beat their breasts, tore their beards, cast up their eyes, and swore that they had not a *para*; they implored pity of the pacha and mercy of the sultan. Upon which Ali, without ceasing to sip his coffee, ordered them to be bastinadoed on the soles of their feet till they brought this money which they did not possess, and which they always succeeded in finding somewhere. The sum counted out, the faithful administrator sent one half to the sultan and put the other into his own coffers, then again returned to his smoking. On these occasions he sometimes complained, despite his patience, of the cares of greatness and the weariness of power; but the next day he thought no more of them, and levied the taxes the next month with the same calmness and disinterestedness. He was a model pacha.

Next to his pipe, coffee, and money, the thing dearest to Ali was his daughter, Delight-of-the-Eyes. He had reason to love her, for in his daughter as in a living mirror Ali saw himself reflected, with all his virtues. As indolent as she was beautiful, Delight-of-the-Eyes could not take a step without three women ready to wait on her. A white slave had charge of her hair and dress, a yellow slave held her mirror or fanned her, and a black slave amused her by her antics, and received her caresses or blows. The pacha's daughter drove out every morning in a great chariot, drawn by oxen. She spent three hours in the bath, and employed the rest of her time in making calls, munching rose conserves, drinking pomegranate sherbet, looking at dancing-girls, and ridiculing her dear friends. After a day so well spent she returned to the palace, kissed her father, and slept a dreamless slumber. Reading, thinking, embroidering, singing, and playing were tiresome tasks, which

Delight-of-the-Eyes took care to leave to her servants. When a girl is young, beautiful, rich, and a pacha's daughter, she is born to amuse herself, and what is there more amusing and more praiseworthy than doing nothing? This is the way that the Turks reason, but how many Christians are Turks in this respect?

There is no happiness here below without alloy; were it not so, earth would make us forget heaven. Ali experienced this. One tax-day the vigilant pacha, less wide-awake than usual, bastinadoed, by mistake, a Greek raya, a protégé of England. The bastinadoed man clamored, as he had a right to do, but the English consul, whose slumbers had been broken, clamored louder than the raya, and England, who never sleeps, clamored still more loudly than the consul. She howled through the journals, vociferated in Parliament, and shook her fist at Constantinople. The sultan grew tired of so much fuss about such a trifle, and being unable to rid himself of his faithful ally, of whom he stood in awe, he determined at least to shake off the pacha, the innocent cause of all this hubbub. His highness' first idea was to strangle his late friend; but he reflected that to punish a Mussulman would give too much exultation and joy to those dogs of Christians, who were always barking. In his inexhaustible clemency, therefore, the Commander of the Faithful contented himself with ordering the pacha to be set on some desert shore and left to die of hunger.

Happily for Ali his judge and successor was an old pacha whose zeal was tempered by years, and who knew by experience that the will of sultans is immutable only in the almanac. He said to himself that his highness might some day regret his old friend, and would then give him credit for a clemency that cost him nothing. He caused Ali and his daughter to be

brought to him in secret, gave them slaves' dresses and a few piasters, and warned them that if they were found in the pachalic the next day, or if he ever heard their names mentioned again, he would strangle or decapitate them, whichever they preferred. Ali thanked him for all his goodness, and an hour later was on his way with a caravan bound for Syria. That very evening the fall and exile of the pacha were proclaimed in the streets of Bagdad, and there was universal rejoicing. On all sides men extolled the justice and vigilance of the sultan, whose eyes were always open to the sufferings of his children. The next month, therefore, when the new pacha, whose hand was somewhat heavy, demanded two and a half million piasters, the good people of Bagdad paid it without grumbling, too happy at having escaped the claws of the brigand who for so many years had pillaged them with impunity.

To save one's head is fortunate, but it is not everything; it is necessary to live, and this is a somewhat difficult task for one accustomed to count upon the labor and money of others. On reaching Damascus, Ali found himself destitute of resources. A stranger, without friends or kinsmen, he was on the point of starving, and, what was still greater grief for a father, he saw his daughter growing pale and wasting away by his side.

What was he to do in this extremity? Ask alms? This was unworthy of a personage who the day before had a nation at his feet. Work? Ali had always lived like a nobleman; there was nothing that he knew how to do. His only secret of raising money had been to bastinado his fellows; but to exercise this respectable means of livelihood in peace it was necessary to be a pacha, and to have permission from the sultan. To carry it on as an amateur, at his own risk and peril,

was to run the risk of being hung as a highway robber. Pachas dislike competition. Ali knew something about it; it had been the pride of his life from time to time to strangle some petty thief who had had the folly to poach upon rich men's domains.

One day, when he had eaten nothing, and Delight-of-the-Eyes, worn out by long fasting, was unable to rise from the mat on which she lay, Ali, prowling around the streets of Damascus like a famished wolf, saw some men lifting jars of oil on their heads and carrying them to the warehouse, where stood a clerk who paid each porter a *para* for a jar. The sight of this little piece of copper made the ex-pacha's heart leap within him. He took his place in the line, and, mounting a narrow staircase, received a huge jar, which he had great difficulty in raising upon his back with both hands.

With rigid neck, elevated shoulders, and wrinkled brow Ali was slowly descending the stairs, when, at the third step, he felt his burden inclining forward. He threw himself back, his feet slipped, and he rolled to the bottom of the staircase, followed by the jar, which broke in a thousand pieces, and deluged him with oil. He was rising, covered with shame, when the clerk of the warehouse seized him by the collar.

"Rascal!" said the latter, "pay me fifty piasters quickly, to repair your awkwardness, and begone. When a man knows nothing of a trade, he should let it alone."

"Fifty piasters!" said Ali, smiling bitterly. "Where do you expect me to get them? I have not a *para*."

"If you do not pay with your purse you shall with your skin," returned the clerk. At a sign from him Ali was seized by four vigorous arms and flung on the ground, his feet were tied with ropes, and, in the

attitude in which he had but too often placed others, he received fifty blows on his soles, as conscientiously applied as if a pacha had presided over the punishment.

He arose, lame and bleeding, wrapped his feet in some rags, and dragged himself home, sighing.

"God is great!" murmured he. "It is just that I should suffer myself what I have made others suffer. But the merchants of Bagdad whom I bastinadoed were happier than I; they had friends who paid for them, while I am famishing, and have nothing to reward me for my beating."

He was mistaken. A good woman, who, by chance or curiosity, had seen his mishap, took pity on him. She gave him oil to dress his wounds, a little sack of flour, and a few handfuls of pease on which to live till he was cured, and that night, for the first time since his fall, Ali could sleep without care for the morrow.

Nothing sharpens the wits like sickness and suffering. In his forced rest Ali was struck with a bright thought. "I was a fool," reflected he, "to undertake to be a porter. A pacha's strength does not lie in his muscles: to oxen belongs that honor. What distinguish men of my condition are skill and sleight of hand. I was an unequaled hunter, and, moreover, I know how to flatter and lie. I ought to know how, I have been a pacha. I will choose a business in which I can astonish the world by these brilliant qualities, and rapidly win an honorable fortune." Reflecting thus, Ali turned barber.

The first few days all went well. The master of the new barber made him draw water, scrub the shop, shake the rugs, keep the utensils in order, and serve the customers with coffee and pipes. Ali performed these delicate functions admirably. If by chance the head

of some mountain peasant was intrusted to him, a wrong slip of the razor passed unnoticed. These good people are tough-skinned, and are not ignorant that they were made to be flayed; a little more or less does not affect them or rouse them from their torpor.

One morning, in the absence of the head barber, a great personage entered the shop, the very sight of whom intimidated poor Ali. It was the pacha's buffoon, a hideous little humpback with a head like a pumpkin, long hairy claws, a restless eye, and teeth like an ape. While Ali covered his face with a fragrant lather, the buffoon, leaning back in his chair, amused himself with pinching the new barber, laughing in his face, and running out his tongue at him. Twice he knocked from his hands the basin of suds, which delighted him to such a degree that he flung him four *paras*. Nevertheless, the prudent Ali preserved his gravity. Absorbed in the care of so precious a face, he was guiding his razor with admirable regularity and lightness, when all at once the humpback made such a hideous grimace and uttered such a cry that the barber, frightened, suddenly drew back his hand, carrying away on the end of his razor half of an ear, and that not his own.

Buffoons like to laugh, but it is at the expense of others. There are few men with thinner skins than those who chafe the skins of their neighbors. To fling himself on Ali and cuff and choke him, shouting murder meanwhile, was the humpback's first impulse. Happily for Ali, the cut was so deep that the wounded man was soon forced to think of his ear, from which a stream of blood was gushing. Ali seized the lucky moment and fled through the lanes of Damascus with the swiftness of a man who knows that to be caught is to be hanged.

After many windings, he hid himself in a ruined cellar, and only ventured home in the darkness and silence of night. To stay at Damascus after such an accident was certain death. Ali had no difficulty in convincing his daughter that it was necessary to depart, and that at once. Their baggage was little encumbrance to them, and before dawn they had reached the mountain. For three days they walked without stopping, with nothing to eat but a few figs filched from the trees on the road, and a little water procured with great difficulty from the bottom of the dried-up ravines. But every misfortune has its compensation, and it must be said that never, in the times of their splendor, had the pacha or his daughter eaten or drunk with better appetite.

At their last stopping place the fugitives were welcomed by an honest peasant who liberally practiced the holy law of hospitality. After supper he talked with Ali, and, finding him without resources, offered to take him for a shepherd. To lead to the mountain a score of goats, followed by half a hundred sheep, was not a tiresome task; two good dogs did the hardest part of the work; he ran no risk of being beaten for his awkwardness; he had all the milk and cheese he wanted, and if the farmer did not give him a *para*, he at least permitted Delight-of-the-Eyes to take as much wool as she could spin, for her father's clothes and her own. Ali, who had no choice but to die of hunger or be hanged, decided, without much reluctance, to lead the life of the patriarchs. The very next morning he made his way to the mountain with his daughter, his dogs, and his flock.

Once in the fields, Ali relapsed into his indolent ways. Stretched on his back smoking his pipe, he passed his time watching the flight of the birds through

the air. Poor Delight-of-the-Eyes was less patient; she thought of Bagdad, and did not forget in her distaff the sweet leisure of olden times.

"My father!" she often said, "what is the use of life when it is nought but perpetual misery? Is it not better to put an end to it at once than to die by a slow fire?"



"God is great, my daughter," answered the wise shepherd. "What he does is well done. I have repose. At my age this is the chief of blessings; you see, therefore, that I am resigned. Ah! if I had only learned a trade. You have youth and hope, and can look for a change of fortune. Are not these good reasons for taking comfort?"

"I am resigned, my good father," said Delight-of-the-Eyes, sighing. The more she hoped, the less was her resignation.

Ali had led his happy life in solitude for more than a year when one morning the son of the pacha of Damascus was hunting on the mountain. While chasing a wounded bird he lost his way. Alone, and far from his suite, he sought to find his path by following the course of a brook, when, on turning a rock, he saw before him a young girl sitting on the grass with her feet in the water, and braiding up her long hair. At the sight of this beautiful creature Yousouf uttered a cry. Delight-of-the-Eyes raised her head. Terrified at the sight of a stranger, she fled to her father, and disappeared from the gaze of the astonished prince.

"Who can this be?" thought Yousouf. "The flower of the mountain is fresher than the rose of our gardens. This daughter of the desert is more beautiful than our sultanas. Here is the woman of whom I have dreamed."

He followed the steps of the unknown as fast as the slippery stones would let him, and at last found Delight-of-the-Eyes busied in milking the goats, while Ali called off the dogs, whose furious barking announced the stranger's approach. Yousouf complained that he had lost his way and was dying of thirst. Delight-of-the-Eyes immediately brought him milk in a great earthen jug. He drank slowly, gazing at the father and daughter without speaking, and at last decided to ask his way. Ali, followed by his two dogs, conducted the hunter to the foot of the mountain and returned trembling. The stranger had given him a piece of gold; he must be an officer of the sultan, perhaps a pacha. To Ali, who judged from his own recollections, a pacha was a man who could only do harm, and whose friendship was to be dreaded quite as much as his hatred.

On reaching Damascus, Yousouf threw himself on

his mother's neck; he repeated to her that she was as beautiful as at sixteen, and as brilliant as the moon in its full; that she was his only friend, and that he loved no one else in the world; saying which he kissed her hands again and again.

His mother smiled. "My child," said she, "you have a secret to confide to me; speak quickly. I know that I am not as beautiful as you call me, but I am sure of this, that you will never have a better friend than I."

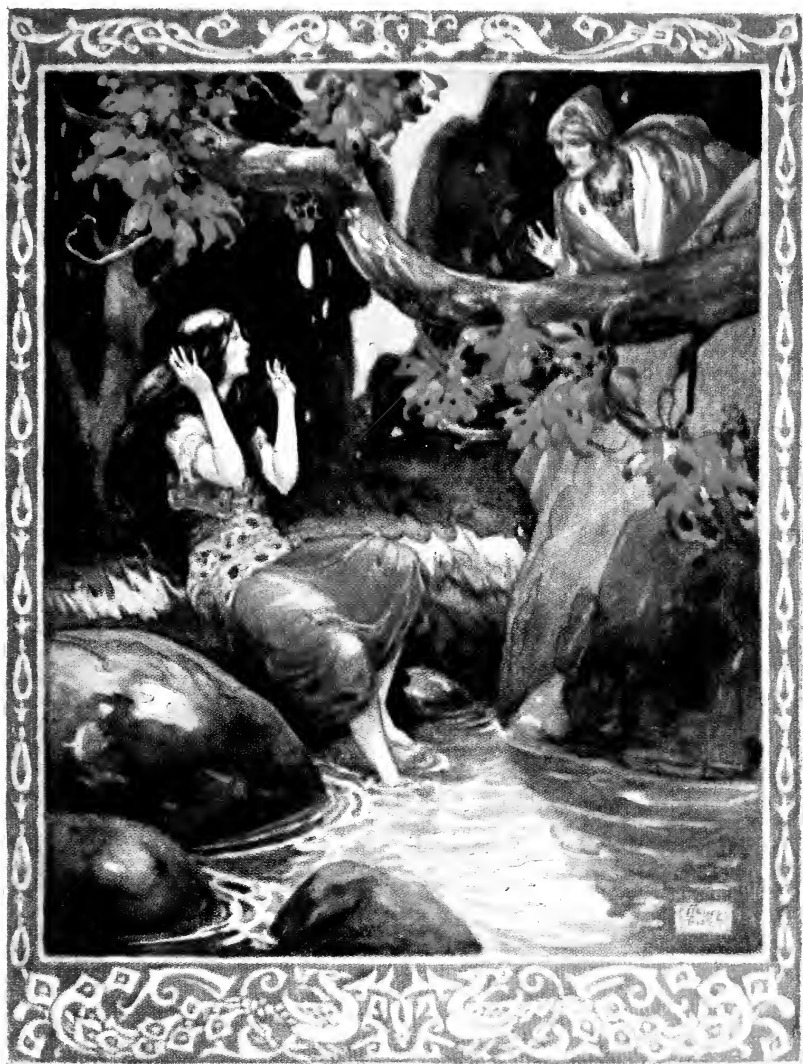
Yousouf did not wait to be urged. He was burning to tell what he had seen on the mountains; he drew a marvelous portrait of the fair stranger, and declared that he could not live without her, and would marry her the next day.

"A little patience, my son!" said his mother. "Let us learn who this miracle of beauty is; after that we will persuade your father to give his consent to this happy marriage."

When the pacha learned of his son's passion, he began with expostulations and ended with a fit of rage. Were rich and elegant girls so scarce in Damascus that his son must go to the desert in search of a shepherdess? Never would he give his consent to this wretched marriage, never!

Never is a word which a prudent man should beware of speaking in his household when his wife and son are arrayed against him. A week had not passed before the pacha, moved by the mother's tears and the son's pallor, retired from the field, tired of the contest; but, like a strong-minded man who knows his own value, he openly declared that he was doing a foolish thing and that he knew it.

"All right!" said he. "Let my son marry a shepherdess, if he will. His folly be on his own head. I wash my hands of him. But, that nothing may be



DELIGHT-OF-THE-EYES RAISED HER HEAD



lacking to this absurd marriage, let my fool come hither; he is the fitting messenger to send for this wretched goatherd who has bewitched my household."

An hour after, the humpback, mounted on an ass, was on his way to the mountain, execrating the caprice of the pacha and the love of Yousouf. What sense was there in sending an ambassador to a shepherd, through dust and sun, a delicate man, born to live under the canopy of a palace and to delight lords and princes by the brilliancy of his wit? But, alas! fortune is blind; it seats fools on the pinnacle of power, and reduces geniuses who would not die of hunger to the condition of fools.

Three days of fatigue had not softened the ill-humor of the humpback, when he saw Ali lying in the shade of a tree, and more occupied with his pipe than his sheep. Giving his ass a kick, the fool advanced toward the shepherd with the majesty of a vizier.

"Fellow!" said he, "you have bewitched the pacha's son; he does you the honor to marry your daughter. Scour up this pearl of the mountain quickly as you can, I must carry her back to Damascus. As for yourself, the pacha sends you this purse, and orders you to clear out of the country as fast as possible."

Ali let fall the purse that was flung him, and, without turning his head, asked the humpback what he wanted.

"Stupid brute!" returned the latter. "Didn't you hear me? The pacha's son takes your daughter in marriage."

"What does the pacha's son do for a living?" asked Ali.

"What does he do for a living?" cried the buffoon, bursting into a fit of laughter. "Blind dotard that you are, do you imagine that so exalted a personage as he

is a rustic of your sort? Don't you know that the pacha shares the tithes of the provinces with the sultan, and that out of the forty sheep that you tend so badly, there are five that belong to him by right, and thirty-five that he can take if he chooses?"

"I am not talking of the pacha," tranquilly returned Ali. "God protects his excellency! I ask you what his son does for a living? Is he an armorer?"

"No! you fool!"

"A blacksmith?"

"By no means!"

"A carpenter?"

"No!"

"A charcoal-burner?"

"No, no; he is a great gentleman. Don't you know, you blind bat, that nobody but beggars work? The son of the pacha is a noble lord; that is to say, he has white hands and does nothing."

"Then he shall not have my daughter," said the shepherd, gravely. "Housekeeping is expensive, and I will never give my daughter to a husband who cannot support his wife. But perhaps the pacha's son has some lighter trade. Is not he an embroiderer?"

"No," said the buffoon, shrugging his shoulders.

"A tailor?"

"No."

"A potter?"

"No."

"A basket-maker?"

"No."

"Is he a barber, then?"

"No," said the humpback, purple with rage; "stop this foolish jesting or I will have you beaten to a jelly. Call your daughter, I am in haste."

"My daughter shall not go," said the shepherd.

He whistled to his dogs, who gathered round him, growling, and showing fangs which appeared to give little amusement to the envoy of the pacha. He mounted his ass, and, shaking his fist at Ali, who held back his dogs, bristling with rage—

“Wretch!” said he, “you shall soon hear from me. You shall know what it costs to have any other will than that of the pacha, your master and mine.”

The buffoon returned to Damascus with his maimed ear hanging lower than usual. Happily for him, the pacha took the matter in good part. It was a little disappointment for his wife and son, and a triumph for himself; a double success which agreeably tickled his pride.

“Upon my word!” said he, “the honest man is even madder than my son. But don’t be troubled, Yousouf, a pacha never breaks his word. I will send four horsemen to the mountain to bring me the girl; as for the father, have no anxiety about him; I have a decisive argument in store for the fellow.”

Saying this, he made an airy gesture with his hand, as if cutting down something that was in his way.

At a sign from his mother Yousouf arose, and entreated his father to leave to him the care of carrying out this little adventure. Doubtless the means proposed was irresistible, but Delight-of-the-Eyes might be weak enough to love the old shepherd. She would weep for him; and the pacha would not wish to sadden the honeymoon. Yousouf hoped, with a little persuasion, easily to overcome a resistance which seemed to him unreasonable.

“Very well,” said the pacha. “You think yourself wiser than your father; it is the way with sons. Go, and do as you please; but I warn you that from this day forth I wash my hands of your affairs. If that

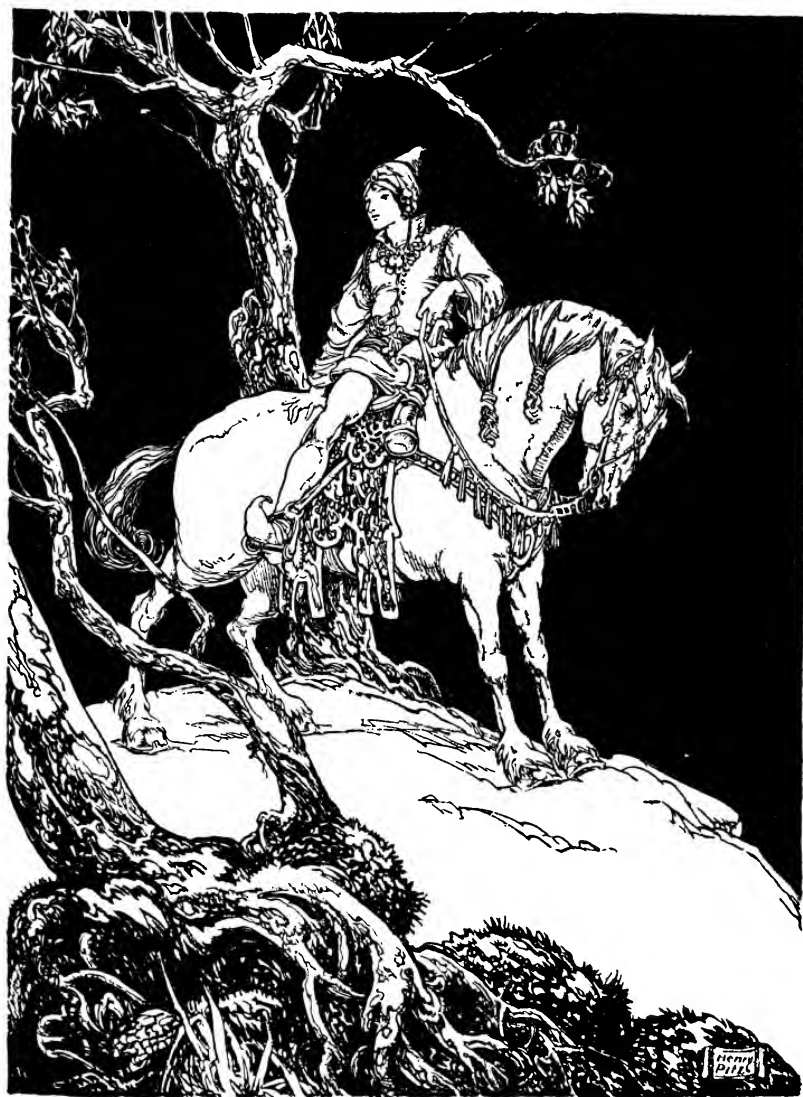
old fool of a shepherd refuses you, that ends the matter. I would give a thousand piasters to see you return as discomfited as the humpback."

Yousouf smiled; he was sure of success. How could Delight-of-the-Eyes help loving him? He adored her. Moreover, at twenty, who doubts himself or his good fortune? Doubt is for those whom life has deceived, and not for those whom she intoxicates with her first illusions.

Ali received Yousouf with all the respect due to the son of a pacha. He thanked him politely for his honorable proposal, but continued inexorable. No trade—no marriage. It was for him to choose. The young man had thought that Delight-of-the-Eyes would come to his aid; but Delight-of-the-Eyes was invisible, and there was a good reason for her not disobeying her father; the prudent Ali had not said a word to her about the marriage. Since the visit of the buffoon he had carefully kept her shut up in the house.

The pacha's son returned from the mountain utterly cast down. What should he do? Return to Damascus to be the butt of his father's railleries? Never would Yousouf resign himself to this. Lose Delight-of-the-Eyes? Rather death. Make this old shepherd change his mind? Yousouf could not hope for it, and he almost came to the point of regretting that he had ruined his cause by too great kindness of heart.

Amid these sad reflections he suddenly perceived that his horse, left to himself, had strayed away. Yousouf found him on the edge of an olive wood. In the distance he spied a village. The bluish smoke rose above the roofs, and he heard the barking of dogs, and the song of the workmen, and the noise of the forge and hammer. An idea struck Yousouf. What hindered



IN THE DISTANCE HE SPIED A VILLAGE



him from learning a trade? Was it so very difficult? Was not Delight-of-the-Eyes worth any sacrifice? The young man tied his horse to an olive tree, upon which he hung his weapons, embroidered jacket, and turban. At the first house he reached he complained of having been robbed by the Bedouins, bought a rough suit of clothes, and, thus disguised, went from door to door to offer himself as an apprentice. Yousouf's appearance was so prepossessing that everyone welcomed him cordially, but he was appalled at the conditions proposed to him. The blacksmith asked two years to teach him, the potter one year, and the mason six months—it was a century. The pacha's son would not resign himself to this long servitude. All at once a shrill voice called out: "Ho! my son, if you are in haste and are not ambitious, come with me; in a week I will teach you how to earn a living."

Yousouf raised his head. A few steps from him a little fat man with round belly and rosy face was seated on a bench with his legs crossed; he was a basket-maker. He was surrounded with straw and reeds of all colors. With a skillful hand he plaited the braids, which he then sewed together into baskets, mats, and hats of varied shades and patterns. It was a charming sight.

"You are my master," said Yousouf, taking the hand of the basket-maker; "and if you can teach me your trade in two days, I will pay you well for your pains. Here is my advance fee."

With these words he flung two pieces of gold to the amazed workman.

An apprentice who scatters gold about him is not seen every day. The basket-maker did not doubt that he had to deal with a prince in disguise. He did wonders, and, as his pupil lacked neither intelligence

nor good will, before night he had taught him all the secrets of his trade.

"My son," said he, "your education is finished; you shall judge before night whether your master has earned his money. The sun is setting; it is the time when people pass my door on their way home from work. Take this mat, which you have braided and sewed with your own hands, and offer it for sale. Either I am greatly mistaken or you will sell it for four *paras*. For a beginner that is doing well."

The basket-maker was not mistaken. The first purchaser offered three *paras*. He was asked five, and after more than an hour's haggling he finally decided to give four. He drew out his long purse, looked several times at the mat, criticized it, and finally made up his mind to count out his four copper coins, one by one. But, instead of taking the money, Yousouf flung a piece of gold to the purchaser, and ten to the basket-maker; then, seizing his masterpiece, he rushed from the village like a madman. On reaching his horse he spread the mat on the ground, enveloped his head in his mantle, and slept the most restless but, nevertheless, the sweetest sleep that he had ever experienced in his life.

At daybreak, when Ali came to the pasture with his sheep, he was greatly astonished to see Yousouf installed before him under the old carob-tree. As soon as he perceived the shepherd, the young man arose, and, taking the mat on which he had been lying—

"My father!" said he, "you required me to learn a trade. I have done so. Here is my work, examine it for yourself."

"It is a fine bit of work," said Ali; "if it is not very smoothly braided, it is honestly sewed. What can you earn by making one mat a day like this?"

"Four *paras*," said Yousouf, "and with a little practice, I could make two at least in a day."

"Be modest," returned Ali; "modesty becomes youthful talent. Four *paras* a day is not much, but four *paras* to-day and four to-morrow make eight *paras*, and four *paras* the day after will make twelve. In fine, it is a trade at which a man can earn a living, and if I had had the wit to learn it when I was pacha, I should not have had to turn shepherd to-day."

These words filled Yousouf with astonishment. Ali told him his whole story. It was risking his head, but a little pride is excusable in a father on giving his daughter in marriage. Ali was not sorry to show his son-in-law that Delight-of-the-Eyes was not unworthy to be the wife of a pacha's son.

The sheep that day went home earlier than usual. Yousouf was anxious to thank the honest farmer who had given shelter to Ali and his daughter. He bestowed on him a purse of gold to reward him for his charity. None is so liberal as a happy man. Delight-of-the-Eyes, on being introduced to the mountain hunter, and informed of Yousouf's intentions, declared that it was a daughter's first duty to obey her father. In such cases, it is said, daughters are always obedient in Turkey.

The same day, in the cool of the evening, they set out for Damascus. The horses were fleet, and their hearts were light; they went like the wind, and, before the close of the second day, they had reached their destination. Yousouf presented his bride to his mother. It is needless to say how great was her joy. After the first caresses, she could not resist the pleasure of showing her husband that she had been wiser than he, and took pleasure in revealing to him the birth of the fair Delight-of-the-Eyes.

"By Allah!" cried the pacha, stroking his long beard to keep himself in countenance, and hide his confusion, "do you imagine, madam, that you can surprise a statesman like me? Should I ever have consented to this union if I had not known the secret that astonishes you? Understand that a pacha knows everything." And he instantly retired to his study to write to the sultan, that he might decide Ali's fate. He was not ready to displease his highness for the bright eyes of an outlawed family. Youth loves romance in life, but the pacha was a serious man, who was anxious to live and die a pacha.

All sultans love stories, if we are to believe "The Thousand and One Nights." Ali's protector had not degenerated from his ancestors. He sent a ship expressly to Syria to bring the ex-pacha of Bagdad to Constantinople. Ali, clad in rags, with crook in hand, was led to the seraglio, where, before a numerous audience, he had the honor of amusing his majesty during a whole afternoon.

When Ali had finished his story, the sultan ordered him to be clothed in a robe of honor. Of a pacha his highness had made a shepherd; he wished now to astonish the world by a new miracle of his omnipotence, and of a shepherd to make a pacha.

The whole court applauded this brilliant mark of favor. Ali threw himself at the sultan's feet, and declined an honor which had lost all attractions for him. He did not wish, he said, to run the risk of displeasing the master of the world a second time, and begged to grow old in obscurity, blessing the generous hand that had rescued him from the abyss into which he had justly fallen.

Ali's boldness appalled the spectators, but the sultan smiled.

"God is great!" he cried, "and has some new surprise in store for us each day. During the twenty years that I have reigned, this is the first time that one of my subjects has asked to be nothing. For the rarity of the thing, Ali, I grant your prayer. All that I ask is that you shall accept a gift of a thousand purses. No one must leave my presence empty-handed."

On his return to Damascus Ali bought a beautiful garden, filled with oranges, lemons, apricots, plums, and grapes. To dig, hoe, graft, prune, and water these was his sole delight. He went to bed every night with a tired body and tranquil soul, and arose every morning refreshed and light-hearted.

Delight-of-the-Eyes had three sons, all more beautiful than their mother. Old Ali undertook to bring them up. He taught all of them gardening, and made each one learn a different trade. To engrave on their hearts the truth that he had learned only in exile, he inscribed on the walls of his house and garden the finest passages of the Koran, above which he wrote these wise sayings, which the Prophet himself would not have disowned:

"Labor is the only treasure that never fails us."

"Use thy hands for work and thou wilt never stretch them for alms."

"When thou knowest what it costs to earn a *para*, thou wilt respect others' property and labor."

"Work brings health, wisdom, and joy."

"Labor and dullness never dwell under the same roof."

It was amid such wise teachings that the sons of Delight-of-the-Eyes grew up. All three were pachas. Whether they profited by their grandfather's counsels I know not. I like to think so, although the annals of the Turks are silent concerning it. The first lessons of

infancy are not forgotten. It is to education that we owe three-fourths of our vices and half our virtues. Good people, remember what you owe to your fathers, and say to yourselves that wicked men and pachas, are, for the most part, only children badly trained.

Taken from Edouard Laboulaye's *Last Fairy Tales*, in which he has retold old stories in so witty and distinguished a manner that they appear as new. Translated from the French by Mary L. Booth, and copyrighted by Harper and Brothers, New York, 1884. Reprinted here by permission.

THE STORY OF MERRYMIND

By Frances Browne

ONCE upon a time there lived in the north country a certain poor man and his wife, who had two cornfields, three cows, five sheep, and thirteen children. Twelve of these children were called by names common in the north country—Hard-head, Stiffneck, Tightfingers, and the like; but when the thirteenth came to be named, either the poor man and his wife could remember no other name, or something in the child's look made them think it proper, for they called him Merrymind, which the neighbors thought a strange name, and very much above their station. However, as they showed no other signs of pride, the neighbors let that pass.

Their thirteen children grew taller and stronger every year, and they had hard work to keep them in bread; but when the youngest was old enough to look after his father's sheep, there happened the great fair, to which everybody in the north country went, because it came only once in seven years, and was held on midsummer day—not in any town or village, but on a green plain, lying between a broad river and a high hill, where it was said the fairies used to dance in old and merry times.

Merchants and dealers of all sorts crowded to that fair from far and near. There was nothing known in the north country that could not be bought or sold in it, and neither old nor young were willing to go home without a fairing.

The poor man who owned this large family could afford them little to spend in such ways; but as the fair happened only once in seven years, he would not show a poor spirit. Therefore, calling them about him, he opened the leathern bag in which his savings were stored, and gave every one of the thirteen a silver penny.

The boys and girls had never before owned so much pocket money; and, wondering what they should buy, they dressed themselves in their holiday clothes, and set out with their father and mother to the fair. When they came near the ground that midsummer morning, the stalls, heaped up with all manner of merchandise, from gingerbread upwards, the tents for fun and feasting, the puppet shows, the rope dancers, and the crowd of neighbors and strangers, all in their best attire, made those simple people think their north country fair the finest sight in the world.

The day wore away in seeing wonders, and in chatting with old friends. It was surprising how far silver pennies went in those days; but before evening twelve of the thirteen had got fairly rid of their money. One bought a pair of brass buckles, another a crimson riband, a third green garters; and father bought a tobacco pipe, the mother a horn snuffbox—in short, all had provided themselves with a fairing except Merry-mind.

The cause of the silver penny remaining in his pocket was that he had set his heart upon a fiddle; and fiddles enough there were in the fair—small and large, plain and painted. He looked at and priced the most of them, but there was not one that came within the compass of a silver penny. His father and mother warned him to make haste with his purchase for they must all go home at sunset, because the way was long.

The sun was getting low and red upon the hill; the fair was growing thin, for many dealers had packed up their stalls and departed; but there was a mossy hollow in the great hillside to which the outskirts of the fair had reached, and Merrymind thought he would see what might be there. The first thing was a stall of fiddles, kept by a young merchant from a far country, who had many customers, his goods being fine and new; but hard by sat a little gray-haired man, at whom everybody had laughed that day because he had nothing on his stall but one old dingy fiddle, and all its strings were broken. Nevertheless, the little man sat as stately as if he had the best stall in the fair, and he called to the passers-by, "Fiddles to sell!"

"Buy a fiddle, my young master?" he said, as Merrymind came forward. "You shall have it cheap. I ask but a silver penny for it; and if the strings were mended, its like would not be in this north country."

Merrymind thought this a great bargain. He was a handy boy, and could mend the strings while watching his father's sheep. So down went the silver penny on the little man's stall, and up went the fiddle under Merrymind's arm.

"Now, my young master," said the little man, "you see that we merchants have a deal to look after, and if you help me to bundle up my stall, I will tell you a wonderful piece of news about that fiddle."

Merrymind was good-natured and fond of news, so he helped him to tie up with an old rope the loose boards and sticks that composed his stall, and when they were hoisted on his back like a fagot, the little man said—

"About that fiddle, my young master: it is certain the strings can never be mended, nor made new, except by threads from the night-spinners which, if you get,

it will be a good pennyworth"; and up the hill he ran like a greyhound.

Merrymind thought that was queer news, but being given to hope the best, he believed the little man was only jesting, and made haste to join the rest of the family, who were soon on their way home. When they got there everyone showed his bargain, and Merrymind showed his fiddle; but his brothers and sisters laughed at him for buying such a thing when he had never learned to play. His sisters asked him what music he could bring out of broken strings; and his father said—

"Thou hast shown little prudence in laying out thy first penny, from which token I fear thou wilt never have many to lay out."

In short, everybody except his mother threw scorn on Merrymind's bargain. She, good woman, said if he had laid out one penny ill, he might lay out the next better; and who knew but his fiddle would be of use some day?

To make her words good, Merrymind fell to repairing the strings—he spent all his time, both night and day, upon them; but, true to the little man's parting words, no mending would stand, and no string would hold on that fiddle. Merrymind tried everything, and wearied himself to no purpose.

At last he thought of inquiring after people who spun at night; and this seemed such a good joke to the north-country people, that they wanted no other till the next fair.

In the meantime Merrymind lost credit at home and abroad. Everybody believed in his father's prophecy; his brothers and sisters valued him no more than a herdboyc; the neighbors thought he must turn out a scapegrace. Still the boy would not part with his

fiddle. It was his silver pennyworth, and he had a strong hope of mending the strings for all that had come and gone; and since nobody at home cared for him except his mother, and as she had twelve other children, he resolved to leave the scorn behind him, and go to seek his fortune.

The family were not very sorry to hear of that intention, being in a manner ashamed of him; besides, they could spare one out of thirteen. His father gave him a barley cake, and his mother her blessing. All his brothers and sisters wished him well. Most of the neighbors hoped that no harm would happen to him; and Merrymind set out one summer morning with the broken-stringed fiddle under his arm.

There were no highways then in the north country—people took whatever path pleased them best; so Merrymind went over the fair ground and up the hill, hoping to meet the little man, and learn something of the night-spinners. The hill was covered with heather to the top, and he went on without meeting anyone. On the other side it was steep and rocky, and after a hard scramble down he came to a narrow glen all overgrown with wild furze and brambles. Merrymind had never met with briers so sharp, but he was not the boy to turn back readily, and pressed on in spite of torn clothes and scratched hands, till he came to where two paths met. One of them wound through a pine wood, he knew not how far, but it seemed green and pleasant. The other was a rough, stony way leading to a wide valley surrounded by high hills, and overhung by a dull, thick mist, though it was yet early in the summer evening.

Merrymind was weary with his long journey, and stood thinking of what path to choose, when, by the way of the valley, there came an old man as tall and

large as any three men of the north country. His white hair and beard hung like tangled flax about him; his clothes were made of sackcloth, and on his back he carried a heavy burden of dust heaped high in a great pannier.

"Listen to me, you lazy vagabond!" he said, coming near to Merrymind. "If you take the way through the wood I know not what will happen to you; but if you choose this path, you must help me with my pannier, and I can tell you it's no trifle."

"Well, father," said Merrymind, "you seem tired, and I am younger than you, though not so tall; so, if you please, I will choose this way, and help you along with the pannier."

Scarce had he spoken, when the huge man caught hold of him, firmly bound one side of the pannier to his shoulders with the same strong rope that fastened it on his own back, and never ceased scolding and calling him names as they marched over the stony ground together. It was a rough way and a heavy burden, and Merrymind wished himself a thousand times out of the old man's company, but there was no getting off; and at length, in hopes of beguiling the way, and putting him in better humor, he began to sing an old rhyme which his mother had taught him.

By this time they had entered the valley, and the night had fallen very dark and cold. The old man ceased scolding, and by a feeble glimmer of the moonlight, which now began to shine, Merrymind saw that they were close by a deserted cottage, for its door stood open to the night winds. Here the old man paused, and loosed the rope from his own and Merrymind's shoulders.

"For seven times seven years," he said, "have I carried this pannier, and no one ever sang while help-

ing me before. Night releases all men, so I release you. Where will you sleep—by my kitchen fire, or in that cold cottage?"

Merrymind thought he had got quite enough of the old man's society, and therefore answered—

"The cottage, good father, if you please."

"A sound sleep to you then!" said the old man, and he went off with his pannier.

Merrymind stepped into the deserted cottage. The moon was shining through door and window, for the mist had gone, and the night looked clear as day; but in all the valley he could hear no sound, nor was there any trace of inhabitants in the cottage. The hearth looked as if there had not been a fire there for years. A single article of furniture was not to be seen; but Merrymind was very weary, and laying himself down in a corner, with his fiddle close by, he fell fast asleep.

The floor was hard, and his clothes were thin, but all through his sleep there came a sweet sound of singing voices and spinning wheels, and Merrymind thought he must have been dreaming when he opened his eyes next morning on the bare and solitary house.

The beautiful night was gone, and the heavy mist had come back. There was no blue sky, no bright sun, to be seen. The light was cold and gray, like that of midwinter; but Merrymind ate the half of his barley cake, drank from a stream close at hand, and went out to see the valley.

It was full of inhabitants, and they were all busy in houses, in fields, in mills, and in forges. The men hammered and delved; the women scrubbed and scoured; the very children were hard at work; but Merrymind could hear neither talk nor laughter among them. Every face looked careworn and cheerless, and every word was something about work or gain.

Merrymind thought this unreasonable, for everybody there appeared rich. The women scrubbed in silk, the men dived in scarlet. Crimson curtains, marble floors, and shelves of silver tankards were to be seen in every house, but their owners took neither ease nor pleasure in them, and every one labored as if it were for life.

The birds of that valley did not sing—they were too busy pecking and building. The cats did not lie by the fire—they were all on the watch for mice. The dogs went out after hares on their own account. The cattle and sheep grazed as if they were never to get another mouthful, and the herdsmen were all splitting wood or making baskets.

In the midst of the valley there stood a stately castle, but instead of park and gardens, brewhouses and washing greens lay round it. The gates stood open, and Merrymind went in. The courtyard was full of coopers. They were churning in the banquet hall. They were making cheese on the dais, and spinning and weaving in all its principal chambers.

In the highest tower of that busy castle, at a window from which she could see the whole valley, there sat a noble lady. Her dress was rich, but of a dingy drab color. Her hair was iron-gray; her look was sour and gloomy. Round her sat twelve maidens of the same aspect, spinning on ancient distaffs, and the lady spun as hard as they, but all the yarn they made was jet black.

No one in or out of the castle would reply to Merrymind's salutations, nor answer him any questions. The rich men pulled out their purses, saying, "Come and work for wages!"

The poor men said, "We have no time to talk!" A cripple by the wayside wouldn't answer him, he was

so busy begging, and a child by a cottage door said it must go to work.

All day Merrymind wandered about with his broken-stringed fiddle, and all day he saw the great old man marching round and round the valley with his heavy burden of dust.

"It is the dreariest valley that ever I beheld!" he said to himself. "And no place to mend my fiddle in; but one would not like to go away without knowing what has come over the people, or if they have always worked so hard and heavily."

By this time the night again came on; Merrymind knew it by the clearing mist and the rising moon. The people began to hurry home in all directions. Silence came over house and field, and near the deserted cottage Merrymind met the old man who had made him carry his pannier.

"Good father," he said, "I pray you tell me what sport or pastime have the people of this valley?"

"Sport and pastime!" cried the old man in great wrath. "Where did you hear of the like? We work by day and sleep by night. There is no sport in Dame Dreary's land!" And, with a hearty scolding for his idleness and levity, he left Merrymind to sleep once more in the cottage.

That night the boy did not sleep so sound. Though too drowsy to open his eyes, he was sure there had been singing and spinning near him all night; and, resolving to find out what this meant before he left the valley, Merrymind ate the other half of his barley cake, drank again from the stream, and went out to see the country.

The same heavy mist shut out sun and sky; the same hard work went forward wherever he turned his eyes: and the great old man with the dust pannier strode on his accustomed round.

Merrymind could find no one to answer a single question; rich and poor wanted him to work still more earnestly than the day before; and fearing that some of them might press him into service, he wandered away to the farthest end of the valley.

In that place there was no work, for the land lay bare and lonely, and was bounded by gray crags, as high and steep as any castle wall. There was no passage or outlet, save through a great iron gate, secured with a heavy padlock; close by it stood a white tent, and in the door a tall soldier, with one arm, stood smoking a long pipe. He was the first idle man Merrymind had seen in the valley, and his face looked to him like that of a friend; so coming up with his best bow, the boy said—

“Honorable master soldier, please to tell me what country is this, and why do the people work so hard?”

“Are you a stranger in this place, that you ask such questions?” answered the soldier.

“Yes,” said Merrymind; “I came but the evening before yesterday.”

“Then I am sorry for you, for here you must remain. My orders are to let everybody in and nobody out; and the giant with the dust pannier guards the other entrance night and day,” said the soldier.

“That is bad news,” said Merrymind; “but since I am here, please to tell me why were such laws made, and what is the story of this valley?”

“Hold my pipe, and I will tell you,” said the soldier, “for nobody else will take the time. This valley belongs to the lady of yonder castle, whom, for seven times seven years, men have called Dame Dreary.

“She had another name in her youth—they called her Lady Littlecare; and then the valley was the fairest spot in all the north country. The sun shone brightest

there; the summers lingered longest. Fairies danced on the hilltops; singing birds sat on all the trees. Strongarm, the last of the giants, kept the pine forest, and hewed yule logs out of it, when he was not sleeping in the sun. Two fair maidens clothed in white, with silver wheels on their shoulders, came by night and spun golden threads by the hearth of every cottage. The people wore homespun, and drank out of horn; but they had merry times. There were May games, harvest homes, and Christmas cheer among them. Shepherds piped on the hillsides, reapers sang in the fields, and laughter came with the red firelight out of every house in the evening.

"All that was changed after a time, nobody knew how, for the old folks who remembered it are dead. Some say it was because of a magic ring which fell from the lady's finger; some because of a spring in the castle court which went dry. However it was, the lady turned into Dame Dreary. Hard work and hard times overspread the valley. The mist came down; the fairies departed; the giant Strongarm grew old, and took up a burden of dust; and the night-spinners were seen no more in any man's dwelling. They say it will be so till Dame Dreary lays down her distaff, and dances; but all the fiddlers of the north country have tried their merriest tunes to no purpose.

"The king is a wise prince and a great warrior. He has filled two treasure houses, and conquered all his enemies; but he cannot change the order of Dame Dreary's land. I cannot tell you what great rewards he offered to any who could do it; but when no good came of his offers, the king feared that similar fashions might spread among his people, and therefore made a law that whosoever entered should not leave it. His majesty took me captive in war, and placed me here

to keep the gate, and save his subjects trouble. If I had not brought my pipe with me, I should have been working as hard as any of them by this time, with my one arm. Young master, if you take my advice you will learn to smoke."

"If my fiddle were mended it would be better," said Merrymind; and he sat talking with the soldier till the mist began to clear and the moon to rise, and then went home to sleep in the deserted cottage.

It was late when he came near it, and the moonlight night looked lovely beside the misty day. Merrymind thought it was a good time for trying to get out of the valley. There was no foot abroad, and no appearance of the giant; but as Merrymind drew near to where the two paths met, there was he fast asleep beside a fire of pine cones, with his pannier at his head, and a heap of stones close by him. "Is that your kitchen fire?" thought the boy to himself, and he tried to steal past. But Strongarm started up, and pursued him with stones, and called him bad names, halfway back to the cottage.

Merrymind was glad to run the whole way for fear of him. The door was still open, and the moon was shining in; but by the fireless hearth there sat two fair maidens, all in white, spinning on silver wheels, and singing together a blithe and pleasant tune, like the larks on a May morning.

Merrymind could have listened all night, but suddenly he bethought him that these must be the night-spinners, whose threads would mend his fiddle; so, stepping up to them with reverence and good courage, he said—

"Honorable ladies, I pray you give a poor boy a thread to mend his fiddle strings."

"For seven times seven years," said the fairy maidens,

"have we spun by night in this deserted cottage, and no mortal has seen or spoken to us. Go and gather sticks through all the valley to make a fire for us on this cold hearth, and each of us will give you a thread for your pains."

Merrymind took his broken fiddle with him, and went through all the valley gathering sticks by the moonlight; but so careful were the people of Dame Dreary's land, that scarce a stick could be found, and the moon was gone and the misty day had dawned before he was able to come back with a small fagot.

The cottage door was still open; the fair maidens and their silver wheels were gone, but on the floor where they sat lay two long threads of gold.

Merrymind first put up his fagot on the hearth, to be ready against their coming at night, and next took up the golden threads to mend his fiddle. Then he learned the truth of the little man's saying at the fair, for no sooner were the strings fastened with those golden threads than they became firm. The old dingy fiddle, too, began to shine and glisten, and at length it was golden also. This sight made Merrymind so joyful, that, unlearned as he was in music, the boy tried to play. Scarce had his bow touched the strings when they began to play of themselves the same blithe and pleasant tune which the night-spinners sang together.

"Some of the workers will stop for the sake of this tune," said Merrymind, and he went out along the valley with his fiddle. The music filled the air; the busy people heard it, and never was such a day seen in Dame Dreary's land.

The men paused in their delving; the women stopped their scrubbing; the little children dropped their work; and everyone stood still in their places while

Merrymind and his fiddle passed on. When he came to the castle, the coopers cast down their tools in the court; the churning and cheese-making ceased in the banquet hall; the looms and spinning wheels stopped in the principal chambers, and Dame Dreary's distaff stood still in her hand.

Merrymind played through the halls and up the tower stairs. As he came near, the dame cast down her distaff, and danced with all her might. Her maidens did the like; and as they danced she grew young again—the sourness passed from her looks, and the grayness from her hair. They brought her the dress of white and cherry color she used to wear in her youth, and she was no longer Dame Dreary, but the Lady Littlecare, with golden hair, and laughing eyes, and cheeks like summer roses.

Then a sound of merrymaking came up from the whole valley. The heavy mists rolled away over hills; the sun shone out; the blue sky was seen; a clear spring gushed up in the castle court; a white falcon came from the east with a golden ring, and put it on the lady's finger. After that Strongarm broke the rope, tossed the pannier of dust from his shoulder, and lay down to sleep in the sun.

That night the fairies danced on the hilltops, and the night-spinners, with their silver wheels were seen by every hearth, and no more in the deserted cottage. Everybody praised Merrymind and his fiddle; and when news of his wonderful playing came to the king's ears, he commanded the iron gate to be taken away; he made the captive soldier a free man, and promoted Merrymind to be his first fiddler, which, under that wise monarch, was the highest post in his kingdom.

As soon as Merrymind's family and neighbors heard of the high preferment his fiddle had gained for him,

they thought music must be a good thing, and man, woman, and child took to fiddling. It is said that none of them except Merrymind's mother, on whom her son bestowed great presents, ever learned to play a single tune.

One of the eight old-fashioned tales in *Granny's Wonderful Chair*, written in the middle of the 19th century by the Irish author, Frances Browne. The stories were reissued in an attractive volume by The Macmillan Company in 1924, and this selection is reprinted here with their permission.



THE THREE POWERS

By Margery Bailey

IN the old days there was a king who was as mighty as salvation and as powerful as judgment, but he had come to that time of life when all his sons were grown up sufficiently to have their own way, and not old enough to have common sense. The six oldest were all gone off to seek adventure, some by sea and some by land, and some by air and snow; as for the youngest, he sat still at home, with his toes in the fire, and chewed the end of a goose quill, for he was a poet, or so most men thought. Now the king was proud of them all, in their degree, but he could not see the makings of the next king in any of the family. He hankered and fretted after a ruler to follow him until the seventh prince was at his wits' end. He could not fix his mind on the simplest rhymes, and at last he was

reduced to wretchedness because he could not invent a suitable subject.

So he collected his papers together and threw his quill in the corner, and says he, "Father, I think I had better be going off like the rest of them," and with that he put on his cap and made for the door.

Hey, how the king did rant and fume! It was bad enough to lose the first six and have only the youngest at home, but to have none at all was more than half again as bad. He refused the seventh prince a sword to bear or a horse to ride, but that was where the youngest son had the best of the others.

"Tut," says he, "I have two legs to carry me and two eyes to guide me, and if anyone should come along who can do more with his hands than I can, why perhaps it is as well that I should be his servant, since I am certainly less useful to myself than to him, if I let a man beat me."

Well, at last the king saw reason and asked the prince what he was going for, and how his letters should be addressed, in case any came to be forwarded. Oh, as to that, the prince was going out in search of adventure that would prove suitable subject matter for poetry.

"And I hope," says he, as modest as the south wind, "to be of some assistance by the way to ladies in distress. But I am going so far and traveling so wide that everything can wait until I come home," says he, and so he started off on foot, whistling like a popinjay, and happy as a duckling in the rain—for he had high hopes of seeing St. Brandan's Islands and Parthenope, Cathay and Peshawur, where, as every man knows, subjects for poetry are so common that they are used for cobblestones. But it is not every high hope that has fulfillment, as the man said when the ladder broke.

As the king's son went through the garden, he heard a voice saying, "Help me out! Oh, help me out!" It was a voice weak and feeble, and it came from nowhere at all, as far as the prince could see. He looked high and he looked low, he looked down where the daisies blow—and there he saw a brown and yellow bee, caught in the tangle of a spider's web.

"Ah, there, bold buccaneer," says he, "you are caught with the gold upon you this time! But even so, for the sake of your husbandry in the hives, I must help you out." He broke the gray threads and released the bee, that spread its wings and flew to a hollyhock by the wall.

"This is your first adventure in assisting ladies in distress," says the bee, as if the prince's exploits were the talk of the garden. "Never call us honey-makers either farmers or buccaneers, for we are no more than honest market wives, who give as much as we get, in fair trade. Now for your kind service I give to you one of my powers, to be used but once in the course of your adventures; but which one it is I have not time to tell you, since I hear the chief marshal of the Bee Empire calling me home to consult about the bee queen's wedding."

Well, that was not bad as an adventure before one had left the garden, certainly; but there was more to come, as the fox said when he stuck fast in escaping from the chicken house, and only his head and shoulders were outside. Under his hand the king's son felt an angry stirring, and when he lifted it, lo you, there was Dame Spider, whose web he had broken.

"How dare you, Human," says she; "you have broken the best network in the garden, and all for a fat dame with a market basket! It is a good thing for you she did not stab you in return," says the spider, "for in

spite of her pretty song, she carries a dagger in her petticoats."

"Ah, now," says the prince, "you are in distress, and all on my account; and I can tell that you are feminine by the wag of your tongue," says he. "How can I help you before I am on my way again?"

"Hold up my embroidery until I can join it together again," says the spider, somewhat softer. "I shall certainly not be able to go fly-fishing until I have my nets spread out, and I have lost a good catch for breakfast already."

So the prince held up the silver threads on his finger, and the spider ran back and forth, weaving them together again, chattering all the while about the folk of the garden; but through all her clack it seemed to the king's son that he heard a tired voice whispering somewhere.

"Do you hear someone speaking?" says he at last to the spider. "I think I hear a soft voice crying." The spider listened a moment.

"Oh, that!" says she; "yes, indeed—but it is only the earth calling again, for you see it is a warm day. I could not repeat it to everybody and anybody," says the spider, "but I must tell you what is well known to the whole garden: earth has a terrible secret—she drinks. Now for your good sense in my affair," says the spider, "I can give you but one thing, and that is one of my powers, to be used but once. I should like to tell you how good a power it is, and how invaluable in adventures, but I have not time to tell you which one it is, for I must get at my fishing."

And with that, off she went, and the king's son was left standing in the sunshine, listening to the whispering voice that came from under his feet. After a bit, he found that it said but one thing over and over:

"Water—water—water—water!"

"Ah," says he, "I should like to assist you, but for water I must go to the brook at the other end of the garden, and I have not the time, since I must be off to find ladies in distress and other suitable subject matter for poetry."

At that there came a little crack in the ground before his feet, and it seemed to the prince like a faint smile.

"My dear," said the tired voice of earth, "you are my son, the younger brother of the roses and the mountains; of me you were made, and to me you will return when you are tired of adventures and the other pretty trifles that occupy your mind up there where you walk upon my shoulders. You will rest more sweetly, and I think you will adventure more boldly, if you spend a little of your gracious youth in the service of your mother."

The king's son ran off to the brook without a word more, and brought water to the parched earth of the garden; and then he knelt down like a little boy and asked her for a blessing. All around him he felt the warm kindness of the earth, and smelling the rich fragrance that rose from it, he was reminded of a sudden to lie down in her tenderness and rest himself for ever. But earth spoke to him cheerfully, and said:

"My blessing is always with my children. Go out now and do well in what you plan to do; but even as your sisters did, so will I. You have now one of my manifold powers, to be used but once in your life—but what it is I may not tell you, since I must be rocking the acorns that fell in my lap yesterday, and keeping them warm and safe."

And so at last the prince opened the great gates and

stepped out into the highway that ran along before the king's garden. I should like to be able to tell you that he was met by a monstrous condor or a golden dragon, and carried over seven seas and nine mountains until he came to the edge of the world where the pixie-folk dangle their heels of an evening, and talk about the immortality of the soul. But the fact was that the king's son never got very far from his father's front gate.

Across the highway there rose three hills, and there was the king's chief town, with lines and rows of little red roofs and silver spires all twinkling in the sun. It came to the prince's mind that he could make better time to the lands of his adventurous hope if he should pass through the town's little streets, and so inquire his way. He stopped and knocked at the first wooden door, and there was a housewife with a white cap on her hair and a besom in her hand. And did she know the way to those countries where he could find suitable subject matter for poetry? That was what the king's son wanted to know.

"Oh, dear, no," says the housewife; "I have enough to do finding my way about through the dust that collects on my own floor, these days." He asked at the second house, and the third, and then he skipped two or three and asked again, but he received much the same answer.

"Now then," says the prince, "I am wasting my time in this city, if I get neither direction nor adventure. I will perhaps do better to ask direct if there are any distressful ladies in the neighborhood." And so he did. Knock, knock! Were there any ladies in distress thereabouts?

"Oh, my, yes!" says the housewife who answered the door—"myself, for instance. The children are crying,

the bread is rising, the carrots need scraping, and the floor needs sweeping. Come in," says she.

"By your leave," says the king's son, "I do not mean quite that kind of distress. I am a poet, and I am in search of suitable subject matter."

"By that definition," says the housewife, "what you want is not distress, but romantical sentiment. Distress is distress, in whatever degree, and as for your subject matter," says she, "it is a poor poet who cannot learn something from children and a hearth fire."

"There is something in that," says the prince, "as the rabbit said when she saw the serpent's tail disappearing into her burrow. It may be that I am not delaying to bad effect, after all." So in he went, and down he sat; he rocked the cradle with one foot and rode a lusty boy cockhorse on the other, and with his arm full of the small daughters of the house, he told such tales and sang such songs as he had never thought to have in him at all. And by the time they were all shoving each other for a soft place on his shoulder, and quarreling like sleepy birds on a branch that is too narrow, the housewife had made the bread and peeled the carrots and swept the floor, and sat herself down with a needle and a pile of ragged hosen to gossip for a bit.

She told him of the streets in the Town on Three Hills, broad and crooked both, and of the trolls and nixies and giants and fairies that lived in the streets of that town just as they do in every other, though common report places them far away in the countries on the edge of midnight and the borders of the morning. The prince's ears stood up, hearing all this, like the ears of a fox when he hears the hunting horns over the valleys at daybreak, but most particularly he attended the tales of the giant Bradaban, whose house lay on the other side of the third hill of the town.

"And has he slain his thousands?" says the king's son.

"Without doubt," says the housewife; "and it is possible, too, that you would find there sweet ladies in distress of the more romantic order, for I have never heard of giants yet," says she, "that they did not carry off ladies in the most abominable fashion."

"Then I must be going," says the prince; "and it strikes me," says he, "that I am packing my ears this day with very fit subject matter for poetry, and that without travel or suffering."

"I think you will come to one of those before long," says the housewife, "for there is no man living that does not suffer in his time. But my thanks to you for your kind service," says she, "and this wish, which is all I have to give you—that after all you may bring home again the secret of joy. That is the only thing that makes poets, in the end."

So at sundown the king's son set off for the third hill of the town, with a bit of the new-baked bread in his pocket. As he went, the candles were lighted in the houses of good citizens, and now and then he heard the scuffling of the Little People among the cobbles and along dusky alleys, but his mind was set on the house of Bradaban, and he neither halted nor hesitated until he came to the other side of the third hill, and the dark house stood in front of him. The king's son looked for the horn that giants keep at their gate, so that heroes may blow upon it to announce their arrival; but there was no more than a knocker on the outer door, such as any gentleman might have. For all that, the prince was standing within earshot of tears and tribulation. Listen! This was the way of it:

He lifted the knocker with both arms and all his strength, and it fell against the frame with a crash that made the ground waver under him. Presently he

heard footsteps behind the door, but they were light and little, so that the king's son thought that perhaps he had made a mistake, after all. Bolts rattled and hinges cried, and the door swung open on such blackness as you might expect to find in the last layer of the Pit Eternal; but in the midst of it, with a hand on the latch, stood a lassie so lovely that her like cannot be pictured by me nor imagined by you. It is enough to say that her yellow hair was like dawn and her grave eyes like twilight, and her beauty so like to flowers that the prince felt himself at home in the garden again with the roses and the lilies on either side of him.

And were there any ladies in distress thereabouts? That was what the king's son wanted to know. The lassie said no words but these: "Are you here at last!" says she, and with that she went to the floor and laid her head against his knees, and the tremor of her weeping crept up to the prince's heart and held it fast.

Now out in the back of the house there rose the most tremendous roaring, and the lassie fled away at the sound of it. Here came the giant stamping through the hall, as big as seven men on horseback, and waving his club at the prince. His ears hung down in fringes from the battles he had been in, and his face was blue and purple with the welts of the old sword cuts. His nostrils ran up and down instead of across his face, the better to smell Christian blood; of his eyes one was white and one was red; his hair was blue and brown like steel, and so coarse that it rattled as he walked.

I cannot deny that the heart of the king's son stood still when he saw Bradaban, but he thought of the weeping lassie, and he stood his ground. He had no time to make his will or commend his soul, and he certainly had no need to ask about adventure—for adventure was upon him with a crash of such blows from

the giant that he had his whole mind set on his life's defense and no more. For the whole of the night the king's son stood in the hallway, fighting with his bare fists and expecting every moment to be his last and worst, for the giant laid on his strokes with the fury of God's lost and disowned. His club was the weight of two men, and every knot of it was studded with nails; and it fell on the prince's shoulders twice to every tick of the clock. There was blood in the hair of the king's son, and blood running into his eyes; his shirt was in ribbons, but his back was so stabbed and torn that you could not tell the difference between the two, and his fists were so battered from striking on the armor of Bradaban that it seemed as if he was fighting with the stumps of his two arms.

But life still stood up in him, and when the dawn came, and there was a little gray light in the hall, the giant put down his club with a sigh, and says he, "I have never seen the like of you. You are a slight creature, like the rest of men, but I have never seen one live after the third hour of such beating as this. You have earth's power of endurance," says Bradaban. "Come in to breakfast."

The king's son rocked on his feet from the weariness of that night, but he thought that the giant was right in one thing; and he would not follow in search of hot water and liniment until he had got down upon his hands and knees to Mother Earth for the power of hers that had been with him in the time of necessity.

Well, I doubt that you will credit me, as the serpent said to the hen when he offered to be nursemaid to the chicks; but after all this the giant was as peaceful as slumber and as smooth as oil. He and the king's son sat at breakfast together, and the yellow-haired lass waited upon them with her eyelashes cast down upon

her pale cheeks, and her hands shaking. When she was gone, and the giant had wiped his hands upon his hair, the king's son crossed his knees and leaned his elbow on the table, and says he, "What is the name of your daughter?"

"My daughter!" says Bradaban, blushing like hot coals; "I have no daughter. I am a bachelor. The lass you see about here is a fine bit of a thing that I picked up in the kingdom next beyond this one. She has a respectable fortune and the highest social connections; in fact, she is a princess, and at my age one thinks of these things first. She suits my fancy in every manner possible, and yet I have been three years making up my mind to marry her."

"Indeed," says the king's son, without showing the state of his mind; "and why this hesitation?"

"Uncouth as I appear," says the giant, "I am a person of considerable erudition, and I have read much in the history of the giant race. There is no authority that I can find for the long life of married giants; not one of my relatives has managed to survive the machinations of resentful female partners. There is something in the minds of women," says the giant with brooding sadness, "which renders them unfit to appreciate the attractions of our kind."

"Ah, yes," says the prince, "very unfortunate, as the man said when he fell over the precipice. It must be very trying," says he, "to have such a one about the house all day."

"As to that," says Bradaban, "no. I bring her out to wash up the dishes and make the beds ready, but in the mid part of the day, when I indulge my weakness for a little doze, I take care to put her in the Wives' Tower—a little device of my ancestors. I have no scruple in showing it to you," says the giant, "since it

has no stairs and no doors or windows, and it cannot be reached from the rest of the house. I simply take her by the shoulders and lift her in or out. The roof goes on only when it's rainy weather."

Well, well, when the prince heard all of this, you can imagine the state he was in. He thought of the three years that he had been at home chewing a goose quill while this business had been going on every day, and of the time he had spent in considering foreign parts, and his heart was bitter inside of him. He went straight out to the tower, with Bradaban grinning after him, and looked at it and studied it, but all to no purpose, for the sides were as smooth as glass, and there was no way up but to climb. For three days the king's son talked and smiled, and tried to set the giant asleep before he should remember to put the princess up in the tower. The princess herself was stirred by his courage and his hope, and hid herself in out-of-the-way places so that the giant should not find her. But still Bradaban shook the ribbons of his ears at them, and smiled with his red and white eyes; and every day the princess was snatched into the giant's fist and set aloft in the doorless Tower of the Wives.

On the third day the king's son stood at the foot of the tower while the giant dozed inside the house, and he was a frantic man. He set his hands on the glossy surface of the wall, and tried to find a foothold in more ways than I can tell you, but all without any more success than a hen has fur. He could not call to the princess to cast a rope down from the tower, because the walls were too high for even his voice to scale them. But the man who sits down and says "I cannot" will never reach the next town, though it be but a mile away.

"If there be no other way," says the prince, with his teeth set together, "I think I will crawl up yonder."

Now he knew well enough that men do not crawl upon walls, but after all there are a many things men may do that no man has done before them, and the king's son was all of a mind to reach the top of the tower, whether he went by the ordinary means of mankind or no. He laid his body flat to the wall and stretched his arms against it, and behold, in the space of a breath he felt himself pressing upwards, light and steady as a feather in the thin hands of the wind.

He crawled up until he could see the second hill of the town, and the first one; and then the spires on the hillsides, and the smoky red roofs and narrow long streets in the valleys between them. He crawled up until he dared look down no more, and saw nothing but the air blowing over him, but he did not stop nor falter till he felt his hands on the stones of the tower railing, and the hands of the princess upon his, helping him over the ledge.

"It's a bold man you are," says the princess, with her eyes shining, "and it is the spider's power you have, to come up to me like this." Well, the king's son saw the truth of that without winking, and he blew a kiss to the spider, with his thanks wrapped up in it, before ever he gave one to the princess.

After their first joy had a little abated, they sat down side by side and spoke of how they were to go from that place, for there was after all neither rope, nor cloth to make it; and there was very little time for considering, for they had no more than begun when they heard a sound like the great wash of waves in a cave mouth at the ocean side, and they knew that the giant was awaking with a yawn.

"Either this place sees the last of us," says the prince, very cheerful, "or we must see the last of it, and I think there is but one way to be going. I have not told you

before this time, but when I started upon my journey, I was given three powers—one by the earth, one by the spider, and one by the bee, to be used once and no more. What powers they were I was not told," says he, "but I know that I endured the giant's buffets by the power of the earth, and I came up to you by one of the spider's powers. Now, I cannot be sure what power the bee gave me," says the king's son, taking the princess' hands in his, "but this is a very high wall, and we have neither rope nor ladder. I think we must remember how the bees fly home at sunset," says he, "and step from the tower into the avenues of air, even as they do."

Just then out comes Bradaban from the house, rubbing his eyes, to take the princess down and set her at the supper tasks. When he saw the king's son standing on the parapet, he rubbed his eyes again, and then, without a sound, in a curious and frightful stillness, he strode out from the house, with his white and red eyes upon them, and foam streaking down his jaws, and his great arms stretched to snatch them down.

The king's son looked down at the princess. "Do you trust me?" says he. Now, even at that moment, the princess was a woman of tact and consideration.

"I do," says she, without a quiver; whereas she was thinking only, "It matters very little—if he can fly, we are saved; and if he cannot, better death with him than here." But of this she said nothing, knowing the nature of men: that they would rather be followed for what they can do, than be loved for what they are.

The king's son drew her into his arms and stepped from the tower's edge—and in a moment they had floated away, and left the giant behind them, and behind them, too, the third hill, and the second hill, the first hill, with all the little smoking roofs and all the

silver spires. They drifted over the highway and over the castle wall, and when the bee came flying in at evening with her sisters, there was the prince to thank her, walking up the path in the garden, hand in hand with the princess. And so they came at last to the door where the king stood, holding his crown over his eyes and squinting into the sunset.

"Well, well," says he, "and did you find any suitable material for poetry?"

"Why, as for that," says the prince, "I have brought home my secret of joy, which is the only thing that makes poets, and here she is," says he; "and I think, father, that I am willing to rule when you will have me to—for with one thing and another, I have found matter enough in the town over the way there to keep me busy for my life days."

"That's good," says the king, handing the crown to him, "for I have found it so myself, and now that you have a wife to help you, I shall give you the kingdom entire, and begin to write down the poetry that the town has been telling me these fourscore years," says he.

And so the king's son and the princess were married; and where most brides have ten waiting maids, she had ten times as many, because she had served so long. But I have heard folk say that she sent them all on holidays every day, to sit on the grass and tell stories to one another, while she brushed her own hair, and fastened her gowns alone, because she knew how it was to be at somebody's beck and call.

And as to the giant? Well, the six elder brothers came home for the wedding, and when they heard of the giant's doings, they put on fresh armor and sharpened their swords, and clattered through the Town on the Three Hills, to get the head of Bradaban as a wedding gift for the bride. But when they came



THEY LEFT THE GIANT BEHIND THEM



back they brought nothing but news, and it was this—that Bradaban had put on the cassock and cowl and gone into a monastery to renounce the society of ladies forever.

Taken from *The Little Man with One Shoe*, by Margery Bailey, a book containing six stories—gay, simple, and poetic. Copyrighted by Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1921, and reprinted with their permission.

THE TOY PRINCESS

By Mary de Morgan

ONCE upon a time, in a country on the other side of the world, the people thought that the politest way to behave was to speak to each other as little as possible. To say what they really meant, or to show what they really felt, was supposed to be very rude indeed. To laugh aloud, or to cry even quietly, was enough to make one avoided by the people of that country.

Now the king had married a princess from a neighboring land, where everyone talked to his heart's content, and laughed when he was happy, and cried when he was sad. In fact, whatever the people of her land felt, they showed. And she was like her people.

So you can imagine that when this princess came as a bride to her new home, expecting to be received with cheers of welcome, she was puzzled to be met without a word or a smile. And when, as time went on, the only words she heard were, "Yes, indeed," "If you please," "Thank you," and "Certainly," the young queen grew thin and pale, and pined for her old home.

Of course everyone was too polite to notice how ill she looked, but she herself knew that she could not live long and when at last she felt she was about to die, she sent for her fairy godmother Taboret, whom she dearly loved, and who had been kind to her always.

For a long time the queen and fairy were alone together, but what they said nobody heard.

Soon afterward a little princess was born, and the queen died. Perhaps the courtiers were sorry for the death of their gentle queen, but of course it would not have been polite to say so.

The baby princess was christened Ursula, and she crowed or cried to her heart's content until she was two years old. Then she began to understand when her nurses, in polite tones, told her it was naughty to make any noise at all, and she grew much quieter. Not only did she grow quieter, but her fat little face grew thin and pale, and her blue eyes less merry and bright. She was not allowed to play with other children, nor had she any games or toys. And so, until she was six years old, she passed most of her time, when she was not at lessons, looking out of the window at the birds flying against the clear blue sky, and sometimes, when her nurses were not listening, she ventured to give a sad little sigh.

It was when Ursula was six years old that the fairy Taboret made herself invisible, and flew over to the king's palace to see how things were going on. She went straight to the nursery, and found poor little Ursula sitting by the window, her head leaning on her hand. It was a very grand room, but when the fairy saw no toys or dolls, she frowned to herself and shook her head.

"Dinner is served for your Royal Highness," said the head nurse to Ursula.

"I don't want any dinner," said Ursula, without turning her head.

"It is not polite to say, 'Don't want' or 'Don't like'," said the nurse. "Come."

So the princess got up and went to the dinner table, and Taboret, unseen, watched them. When she saw how little Ursula ate, and how silent everyone was, she

frowned even more than before, and then flew back to her fairy home. There she sat for some hours in deep thought.

At last she got up and went out to pay a visit to the largest shop in Fairyland.

It was a shop where all that was sold had magic power. The sugar was magic sugar, and charmed the milk or tea or water into which it was put. The hats were wishing caps. Indeed any charm could be had, in any form, in this wonderful shop. To it Taboret flew.

The shopman, when he saw her, came forward at once and bowed low, for Taboret was a good customer.

"I want a princess," she said.

"A princess!" replied the shopman, who was really an old wizard. "What size? I have one or two in stock."

"She must be six years old now, but of course she must grow," said Taboret.

"I have none of that age," said the wizard, "but one can be made. However, I must tell you that it will be expensive."

"Never mind that," said Taboret. "See, I want her to look exactly like this," and she handed a portrait of Ursula to the old man. He examined it carefully.

"When must the toy princess be ready?"

"To-morrow evening, if possible. How much will she cost?"

"She will come to a good deal," said the wizard thoughtfully. "What kind of voice is she to have?"

"Oh, she not need be at all talkative, so that won't add much to the price. If she says, 'Yes, indeed,' 'If you please,' 'Thank you,' and 'Certainly,' that will be quite enough."

"Well, in that case I can let you have a toy princess,



TABORET PICKED UP THE PRINCESS AND FLEW AWAY



six years old, for four footfalls from a cat, two screams from a fish, and two songs from a swan."

"That is a very high price. Still, when can she be ready?"

"To-morrow evening at sunset."

"Very well, but beware of making her either noisy or rough," and with these words Taboret flew out of the shop and away to her own home. Next evening she returned.

"Is the toy princess ready?" she asked.

"She is, and you will admire her, I am sure," said the shopman, and he left the shop. Soon he returned, leading by the hand a little girl so like the Princess Ursula that no one could have known which was which.

"She is a great success," said Taboret. "No, not one fairy in twenty would think she was a toy, and not a single mortal could ever guess."

Taboret turned the toy princess round.

"Yes, she is a great success," she repeated. "And now I must pay you and be off." With these words she raised her wand in the air and waved it three times.

No sooner had Taboret done this than there was heard a loud tramping. It was the footfalls of the cat. Then followed piercing screams from the fairy fish, and last, voices of wonderful beauty, which were the swan's songs. The wizard caught the sounds one after another and put them in his pocket, feeling well paid. Taboret at once picked up the toy princess, and, tucking her under her arm head downward, flew away.

At court that night the little princess had been naughty. She had refused to go to bed. When after much difficulty her nurses had settled her in her crib, she shut her eyes fast and pretended to fall asleep, but she was really wide awake.

As soon as little Ursula was left alone, she got up and stole noiselessly to the window and sat down on the window-seat all curled up in a little bunch, while she looked out at the bright, round moon. As she gazed, the tears rose to her great blue eyes, but remembering that it was naughty to cry, she wiped them away with her nightgown sleeve.

"Ah, moon, pretty, bright moon," she said, "may you cry when you want to, I wonder? I think I should like to come to live with you. It must be nicer up there than down here."

"Would you like to go away with me?" said a kind voice close beside her, and, looking round, Ursula saw a funny old woman in a red cloak. The princess was not afraid, for the old woman had a kind smile and bright black eyes, although her nose was hooked and her chin long.

"Where would you take me?" said Ursula.

"To the seashore, where you could play upon the sands, and where you would have little boys and girls to romp with, and nobody to tell you not to make a noise."

"I'll go, I'll go. Oh, yes, indeed I'll go," cried Ursula, jumping up at once.

"Come along, then," and Taboret (for you have guessed it was she) took the little princess tenderly in her arms and folded her in the red cloak. Then they flew out of the window, and up, up, above the tall tree-tops. Yes, it was cold, but Ursula soon fell fast asleep. Still they kept flying on, over hill and dale, for miles and miles, away from the palace toward the sea.

In a little fishing village, close to the seashore, was a cottage where a poor fisherman, named Mark, lived with his wife and three children. The two boys were called Oliver and Philip. The little girl's name was

Bell. The children played from morning till night on the seashore, and three rosier-cheeked, brighter-eyed little people were nowhere to be found. They were poor, but they were as happy as the day was long.

It was to Mark's home that the fairy Taboret flew with the princess. She laid her quietly on the doorstep, and, having kissed the little girl, blew open the cottage door. Then she vanished in a twinkling.

Within the cottage, the children were asleep in bed, and their father was busily mending his nets, while their mother made a new frock for little Bell.

"Wife, see who that is," said Mark, as the door flew open.

The mother got up and went to the door, and there, on the step, lay Ursula in her little white nightgown, still sleeping soundly.

"Mark, Mark, come here! See, here is a little girl," and the woman lifted up the child and carried her into the cottage.

Then Ursula awoke and stared about her in fright. She did not cry (for she had almost forgotten how to do that), but she trembled to the tips of her little pink toes.

She seemed to have forgotten all about her flight through the air, and all she could tell the fisherman was that she was the Princess Ursula.

At first Mark and his wife could not believe her. How would a princess, of all people, be left on their doorstep? But when they looked at her little nightgown and saw of what fine linen it was made, and how it had a crown embroidered in one corner, they thought that, after all, Ursula must be speaking the truth.

"Whoever she is, we must keep her until she is claimed," said the kind fisherman. So his wife gave

her some bread and milk, and put her to bed beside little Bell.

At the palace, next morning, when her nurses came to wake the princess, they found a little girl as sound asleep as usual. Little did they guess that it was not the real, but a toy princess, put there by the fairy Taboret, who had flown away with Ursula.

"How good she is to-day," they said, as the princess at once answered "Certainly," when told to get up. She let herself be dressed without a word, and all day long she said nothing but "Yes, indeed," "If you please," "Thank you," or "Certainly."

Time went on and the little princess never cried nor laughed, nor said what she really meant, nor showed what she really felt. And so she was thought the politest little girl possible, and became a great favorite with the king and all his court.

Meantime, in the fisherman's cottage far away, the real princess grew up as merry and light-hearted as a bird. She went to school with Oliver and Philip and little Bell, she played with them on the yellow sands, and, as time went on, she forgot about her old, dreary life at the palace. But sometimes the fisherman's wife would bring out the little embroidered nightgown and show it to her, and wonder where she came from and to whom she belonged. "I do not care whose I am, I am going to stay with you always, always," said Ursula.

And as she grew tall and fair, the toy princess at the palace grew too. The only difference was that Ursula's face was rosy and sunburnt, while the toy princess was always pale. Ursula was the joy and sunshine of everyone around, while at court the manners of the toy princess were the admiration of all. She never said what she meant, nor showed what she felt; she never laughed nor cried, nor indeed did she speak



URSULA WAS STANDING BY OLIVER ON THE SEASHORE



at all, except to say, "Yes, indeed," "If you please," "Thank you," and "Certainly." So, in a land where the politest people were those who said least, you cannot be surprised that she was thought a model princess.

As time went on the fisherman and his wife grew gray-headed. Oliver, their eldest son, now did most of the fishing, and Ursula cooked, and swept, and dusted, and mended, and was altogether so useful that the old people could not have done without her.

From time to time Taboret had come unseen to the cottage, that she might have a glimpse of Ursula. Finding her always well and merry, the fairy rejoiced that she had saved the princess from the dreariness of her old life.

One evening, when she had not been there for some time, Taboret found Ursula standing by Oliver on the seashore, watching the waves. Unseen she drew near.

"When we are married," said Oliver, "we will live in that little cottage near by, so that we may come to see them every day. But we must wait until little Bell is big enough to take your place."

"Then we had better say nothing about it yet," said Ursula.

Taboret, when she heard this, grew grave. Dare she let a king's daughter marry a poor fisherman? She must fly to the court and see how things were going on there. When she arrived, the king was surrounded by his court, and Taboret at once made herself visible.

"Pray be seated," said the king, who was always pleased to have the help and advice of the fairy. "As I was about to say to my courtiers, I now grow old, and the time has come that my dear daughter should ascend the throne and wear the crown."

"Before this happens, I must speak to you quietly," and Taboret led the king to a corner of the room.

In half an hour he returned, holding a handkerchief to his eyes. His face was white and he trembled.

"My lords," he said to his courtiers, "I have received a terrible blow." Here the king sobbed aloud. "I could not believe it, were it not by the fairy Taboret that the news is brought." At this point he loudly blew his nose. "My lords, it is the solemn truth that my dear daughter is not my daughter at all, but a toy princess." With these words the king dropped back in his chair, overcome with grief.

Then Taboret stepped to the front and told the courtiers the story of how she had stolen the real princess and had put a toy princess in her place.

The courtiers did not believe the fairy.

"Our princess is a truly charming young lady," said one.

"Your majesty approves the conduct of your dear daughter, is it not so?" another asked the king.

"Yes, indeed, certainly, just so," was the reply.

"Then why should we give heed to a fairy?" asked a third.

"If you do not believe me," said Taboret, "call your princess, and I shall quickly prove my words."

"Certainly," they cried, and the king commanded that his daughter should be summoned. In a few minutes she came, attended by her ladies. Not a word did she say, but, of course, she never did speak until she was spoken to. Silently she stood in the middle of the room.

"We have sent for you," began the king, but before he could say more, Taboret lightly struck the toy princess on the head with her wand. The head fell to the floor and rolled to the feet of the king, muttering,

"Yes, indeed, certainly." The body of the princess stood stock-still and it was seen that she was a hollow toy.

The amazement and horror of the king and his courtiers caused them all to faint. When they had recovered, the king said, "The fairy Taboret tells me that there is somewhere a real princess, whom she will bring to us. Meantime let our—our"—here the king turned to the direction of the headless princess—"let her be carefully placed in a cupboard, and a holiday be given throughout the land, that all may mourn her loss." Having so said, he turned away weeping.

That evening Taboret flew to Mark's cottage and told the kind fisherman and his wife and children the whole truth about Ursula, and that they must part with her.

Ursula listened with the others, and great was the grief of all as the fairy told her tale.

"Still," said Ursula, "why need we mind? If I am a princess, then you shall all come to the palace to live with me. I shall tell my father, the king, and he, I am sure, will send for you."

A few days later Taboret came for Ursula in a grand coach and four, and drove her away to court. It was a long, long drive, and on the way they stopped, that the princess might be dressed in purple and ermine, have roses put in her golden hair, and a chain around her sunburnt neck.

The king, surrounded by his court, awaited the arrival of the real princess. All looked grave and anxious. At last the door opened and Taboret appeared, leading Ursula by the hand.

"That is your father," she said, pointing to the king, and thereupon Ursula ran to him, flung her arms around his neck, and kissed him soundly a dozen times over.

The king nearly fainted away, and all the courtiers shut their eyes and shivered.

"Re-al-ly," sighed one.

"Tr-u-ly," gasped another.

Ursula could not understand what had happened. She saw that everyone was shocked with her, and she could not imagine why. "What have I done? Have I kissed the wrong person?" she suddenly exclaimed. On hearing which, everyone groaned.

"This will never do," said the fairy stepping forward; "if you do not want the Princess Ursula, I shall take her back to those who do. You shall have a week to decide. I shall come back then." And off Taboret flew on her wand, leaving the princess to get on as best she might.

But Ursula could not get on at all. If she spoke or ran, everyone looked shocked, and when at last she burst into tears, they were more shocked still.

"This is indeed a change," sighed one of the ladies.

"Our poor lost princess!" said another.

"How beautiful she behaved even after her head was cut off!" said a third.

No one cared for Ursula, who had come from a home where everyone loved her. It was hard to bear, and before the week was at end, she had grown pale and thin, and only dared to speak in a whisper.

"This will never do," said Taboret, appearing suddenly, eight days after she had flown off. "This will never do. Do you not like living here? Are they not kind to you?"

"Like being here? I hate it. Hate it, hate it, hate it. Take me back, take me back, dear Taboret, to Oliver and Philip and Bell." And Ursula wept aloud.

Taboret only smiled and patted her head. Then she went to the king and his courtiers.

"Why do I find the Princess Ursula in tears?" she demanded. "You behaved kindly to the toy princess. What do you mean by being cruel to your own flesh and blood daughter?"

"The princess who so unfortunately lost her head," began the king, "was always—"

"I really believe," interrupted Taboret, "that you would like to have the doll back again. Very well, take your choice. Which will you have, Ursula or the toy princess?"

The king sank back in his chair. "Ask my courtiers," he said. So the courtiers were asked, and they begged that both princesses might be brought.

Ursula came in with eyes still red with crying. The toy princess was brought carefully from the cupboard. Her head was laid on a table beside her.

"Now all say which you prefer," said Taboret.

And they all, every one of them, chose the toy princess.

"You shall have what you want, sillies that you are," said the fairy. And, with a wave of her wand, she caused the head of the toy princess to be fastened on its body. As soon as this was done, the doll turned slowly round, and, in its old voice, said, "Certainly."

When the king and his courtiers heard this, they made a sound as much like a cheer as they thought would be polite.

"We will at once," said the king, "arrange for my dear daughter to wear the crown and to sit upon the throne."

On hearing this the courtiers again made a sound as like a cheer as they thought would be polite.

Taboret laughed, and, taking the real princess in her arms, flew back to Mark's cottage.

That evening there were quiet and polite rejoicings

at court because of the recovery of the toy princess, but from the fisherman's cottage on the beach went up shouts of joy and laughter. For Ursula had come back and would never again leave her old friends, but would marry Oliver and live happily ever afterwards, by the blue, blue sea.

From a varied and useful collection, *A Staircase of Stories*, compiled by Louey Chisholm and Amy Steedman, copyrighted by G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York, 1920. "The Toy Princess" is one of the sixty-four stories included, and is reprinted here by arrangement.



WHY THE CHIMES RANG

By Raymond MacDonald Alden

THERE was once, in a far-away country where few people ever traveled, a wonderful church. It stood on a high hill in the midst of a great city; and every Sunday as well as on sacred days like Christmas, thousands of people climbed the hill to its great archways, looking like lines of ants all moving in the same direction.

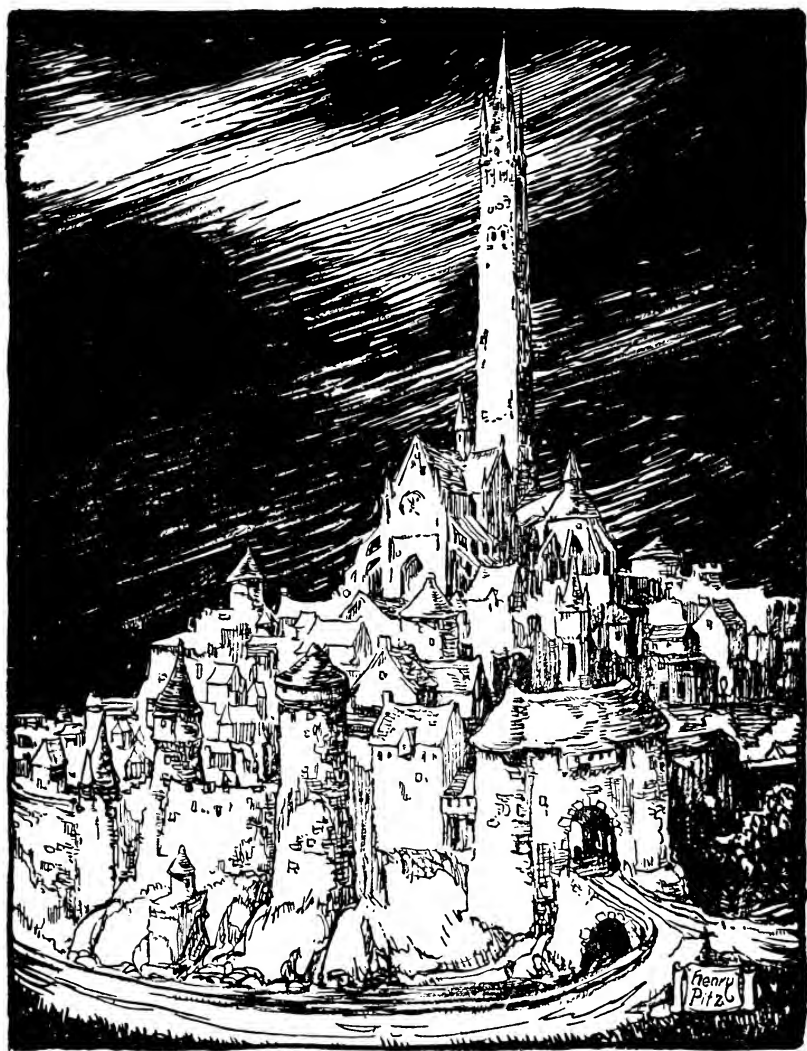
When you came to the building itself, you found stone columns and dark passages, and a grand entrance leading to the main room of the church. This room was so long that one standing at the doorway could scarcely see to the other end, where the choir stood by the marble altar. In the farthest corner was the organ; and this organ was so loud that sometimes when it played, the people for miles around would close their shutters and prepare for a great thunderstorm. Altogether, no such church as this was ever seen before, especially when it was lighted up for some festival, and crowded with people, young and old. But the strangest thing about the whole building was its wonderful chime of bells.

At one corner of the church was a great gray tower,

with ivy growing over it as far up as one could see. I say as far as one could see, because the tower was quite great enough to fit the great church, and it rose so far into the sky that it was only in very fair weather that anyone claimed to be able to see the top. Even then one could not be certain that it was in sight. Up, and up, and up climbed the stones and the ivy; and, as the men who built the church had been dead for hundreds of years, everyone had forgotten how high the tower was supposed to be.

Now all the people knew that at the top of the tower was a chime of Christmas bells. They had hung there ever since the church had been built, and were the most beautiful bells in the world. Some thought it was because a great musician had cast them and arranged them in their place; others said it was because of the great height, which reached up where the air was clearest and purest. However that might be, no one who had ever heard the chimes denied that they were the sweetest in the world. Some described them as sounding like angels far up in the sky; others, as sounding like strange winds singing through the trees.

But the fact was that no one had heard them for years and years. There was an old man living not far from the church, who said that his mother had spoken of hearing them when she was a little girl, and he was the only one who was sure of as much as that. They were Christmas chimes, you see, and were not meant to be played by men, or on common days. It was the custom on Christmas Eve for all the people to bring to the church their offerings to the Christ-Child; and when the greatest and best offering was laid on the altar, there used to come sounding through the music of the choir the Christmas chimes far up in the tower. Some said that the wind rang them, and others that



THE CHURCH STOOD ON A HIGH HILL IN THE MIDST
OF A GREAT CITY



they were so high that the angels could set them swinging. But for many long years they had never been heard. It was said that people had been growing less careful of their gifts for the Christ-Child, and that no offering was brought, great enough to deserve the music of the chimes.

Every Christmas Eve the rich people still crowded to the altar, each one trying to bring some better gift than any other, without giving anything that he wanted for himself, and the church was crowded with those who thought that perhaps the wonderful bells might be heard again. But although the service was splendid, and the offerings plenty, only the roar of the wind could be heard, far up in the stone tower.

Now, a number of miles from the city, in a little country village, where nothing could be seen of the great church but glimpses of the tower when the weather was fine, lived a boy named Pedro, and his little brother. They knew very little about the Christmas chimes, but they had heard of the service in the church on Christmas Eve, and had a secret plan, which they had often talked over when by themselves, to go to see the beautiful celebration.

"Nobody can guess, Little Brother," Pedro would say, "all the fine things there are to see and hear; and I have even heard it said that the Christ-Child sometimes comes down to bless the service. What if we could see Him?"

The day before Christmas was bitterly cold, with a few lonely snowflakes flying in the air, and a hard, white crust on the ground. Sure enough, Pedro and Little Brother were able to slip quietly away early in the afternoon; and although the walking was hard in the frosty air, before nightfall they had trudged so far, hand in hand, that they saw the lights of the big

city just ahead of them. Indeed they were about to enter one of the great gates in the wall that surrounded it, when they saw something dark on the snow near their path, and stepped aside to look at it.

It was a poor woman, who had fallen just outside the city, too sick and tired to get in where she might have found shelter. The soft snow made of a drift a sort of pillow for her, and she would soon be so sound asleep, in the wintry air, that no one could ever waken her again. All this Pedro saw in a moment, and he knelt down beside her and tried to rouse her, even tugging at her arm a little, as though he would have tried to carry her away. He turned her face toward him, so that he could rub some of the snow on it, and when he looked at her silently a moment he stood up again and said:

"It's no use, Little Brother. You will have to go on alone."

"Alone?" cried Little Brother. "And you not see the Christmas festival?"

"No," said Pedro, and he could not keep back a bit of a choking sound in his throat. "See this poor woman. Her face looks like the Madonna in the chapel window, and she will freeze to death if nobody cares for her. Everyone has gone to the church now, but when you come back you can bring someone to help her. I will rub her to keep her from freezing, and perhaps get her to eat the bun that is left in my pocket."

"But I cannot bear to leave you, and go on alone," said Little Brother.

"Both of us need not miss the service," said Pedro, "and it had better be I than you. You can easily find your way to the church; and you must see and hear everything twice, Little Brother—once for you and once

for me. I am sure the Christ-Child must know how I should love to come with you and worship Him; and oh! if you get a chance, Little Brother, to slip up to the altar without getting in anyone's way, take this little silver piece of mine, and lay it down for my offering, when no one is looking. Do not forget where you have left me, and forgive me for not going with you."

In this way he hurried Little Brother off to the city, and winked hard to keep back the tears, as he heard the crunching footsteps sounding farther and farther away in the twilight. It was very hard to lose the music and splendor of the Christmas celebration that he had been planning for so long, and spend the time instead in that lonely place in the snow.

The great church was a wonderful place that night. Everyone said that it had never looked so bright and beautiful before. When the organ played and the thousands of people sang, the walls shook with the sound, and little Pedro, away outside the city wall, felt the earth tremble around him.

At the close of the service came the procession with the offerings to be laid on the altar. Rich men and great men marched proudly up to lay down their gifts to the Christ-Child. Some brought wonderful jewels, some baskets of gold so heavy that they could scarcely carry them down the aisle. A great writer laid down a book that he had been making for years and years. And last of all walked the king of the country, hoping with all the rest to win for himself the chime of the Christmas bells. There went a great murmur through the church, as the people saw the king take from his head the royal crown, all set with precious stones, and lay it gleaming on the altar, as his offering to the Holy Child. "Surely," everyone said, "we shall hear the

bells now, for nothing like this has ever happened before."

But still only the cold old wind was heard in the tower, and the people shook their heads, and some of them said as they had before, that they never really believed the story of the chimes, and doubted if they ever rang at all.

The procession was over and the choir began the closing hymn. Suddenly the organist stopped playing as though he had been shot, and everyone looked at the old minister, who was standing by the altar, holding up his hand for silence. Not a sound could be heard from anyone in the church, but as all the people strained their ears to listen, there came softly, but distinctly, swinging through the air, the sound of the chimes in the tower. So far away and yet so clear the music seemed—so much sweeter were the notes than anything that had been heard before, rising and falling away up there in the sky, that the people in the church sat for a moment as still as though something held each of them by the shoulders. Then they all stood up together and stared straight at the altar to see what great gift had awakened the long-silent bells.

But all that the nearest of them saw was the childish figure of Little Brother, who had crept softly down the aisle when no one was looking, and had laid Pedro's little piece of silver on the altar.

From a collection of nineteen dramatic tales useful for the storyteller—*Story-Hour Favorites*—compiled by Wilhelmina Harper. Copyrighted by The Century Company, New York, 1918, and reprinted with their permission.

THE WORKER IN SANDALWOOD

By Marjorie L. C. Pickthall

THE good curé of Terminaison says that this tale of Hyacinthe's is all a dream. But then Madame points triumphantly to the little cabinet of sandalwood in the corner of her room. It has stood there for many years now, and the dust has gathered in the fine lines of the little birds' feathers, and softened the petals of the lilies carved at the corners. And the wood has taken on a golden gleam like the memory of a sunset.

"What of that, my friend?" says Madame, pointing to the cabinet. And the old curé bows his head.

"It may be so. God is very good," he says gently. But he is never quite sure what he may believe.

On that winter day long ago, Hyacinthe was quite sure of one thing, and that was that the workshop was very cold. There was no fire in it, and only one little lamp when the early dark drew on. The tools were so cold they scorched his fingers, and his feet were so cold he danced clumsily in the shavings to warm them. He was a great clumsy boy of fourteen, dark-faced, dull-eyed, and uncared for. He was clumsy because it is impossible to be graceful when you are growing very fast and have not enough to eat. He was dull-eyed because all eyes met his unlovingly. He was uncared for because no one knew the beauty of his soul. But his heavy young hands could carve things like birds and flowers perfectly. On this winter evening he was

just wondering if he might lay aside the tools, and creep home to the cold loft where he slept, when he heard Pierre l'Oreillard's voice shouting outside.

"Be quick, be quick, and open the door, thou imbecile. It is I, thy master."

"*Oui, mon maître,*" said Hyacinthe, and he sham-bled to the door and opened it.

"Slow worm," cried Pierre, and he cuffed Hyacinthe as he passed in. Hyacinthe rubbed his head and said nothing. He was used to blows. He wondered why his master was in the workshop at that time of day instead of drinking brandy at the Cinq Châteaux.

Pierre l'Oreillard had a small, heavy bundle under his arm, wrapped in sacking, and then in burlap, and then in fine, soft cloths. He laid it on a pile of shavings and unfolded it carefully; and a dim sweetness filled the dark shed and hung heavily in the thin winter sunbeams.

"It is a piece of wood," said Hyacinthe in slow surprise. He knew that such wood had never been in Terminaison.

Pierre l'Oreillard rubbed the wood respectfully with his knobby fingers.

"It is sandalwood," he explained to Hyacinthe, pride of knowledge making him quite amiable, "a most precious wood that grows in warm countries, thou great goblin. Smell it, idiot. It is sweeter than cedar. It is to make a cabinet for the old Madame at the big house."

"*Oui, mon maître,*" said the dull Hyacinthe.

"Thy great hands shall shape and smooth the wood, *nigaud*, and I will render it beautiful," said Pierre, puffing out his chest.

"Yes, master," answered Hyacinthe humbly, "and when is it to be ready for Madame?"

"Madame will want it perhaps next week, for that is Christmas. It is to be finished and ready on the holy festival, great sluggard. Hearest thou?" and he cuffed Hyacinthe's ears again furiously.

Hyacinthe knew that the making of the cabinet would fall to him, as most of the other work did. When Pierre l'Oreillard was gone he touched the strange, sweet wood, and at last laid his cheek against it, while the fragrance caught his breath. "How it is beautiful!" said Hyacinthe, and for a moment his eyes glowed and he was happy. Then the light passed, and with bent head he shuffled back to his bench through a foam of white shavings curling almost to his knees.

"Madame will want the cabinet for Christmas," repeated Hyacinthe to himself, and fell to work harder than ever, though it was so cold in the shed that his breath hung in the air like a little silvery cloud. There was a tiny window on his right, through which, when it was clear of frost, one looked on Terminaison; and that was cheerful and made him whistle. But to the left, through the chink of the ill-fitting door, there was nothing to be seen but the forest, and the road dying away in it, and the trees moving heavily under the snow.

Brandy was good at the Cinq Châteaux, and Pierre l'Oreillard gave Hyacinthe plenty of directions but no further help with the cabinet.

"That is to be finished for Madame at the festival, sluggard," said he every day, cuffing Hyacinthe about the head; "finished, and with a prettiness about the corners, hearest thou, *ourson?*"

"Yes, monsieur," said Hyacinthe in his slow way; "I will try to finish it. But if I hurry I shall spoil it."

Pierre's little eyes flickered, "See that it is done, and done properly. I suffer from a delicacy of the con-

stitution and a little feebleness of the legs these days, so that I cannot handle the tools properly. I must leave this work to thee, *gâcheur*. And stand up and touch a hand to thy cap when I speak to thee, slow worm."

"Yes, monsieur," said Hyacinthe wearily.

It is hard to do all the work and to be beaten into the bargain. And fourteen is not very old. Hyacinthe worked on at the cabinet with his slow and exquisite skill. But on Christmas Eve he was still at work and the cabinet unfinished.

"The master will beat me," thought Hyacinthe, and he trembled a little, for Pierre's beatings were cruel. "But if I hurry, I shall spoil the wood, and it is too beautiful to be spoiled."

But he trembled again when Pierre came into the workshop, and he stood up and touched his cap.

"Is the cabinet finished, imbecile?" asked Pierre. And Hyacinthe answered in a low voice, "No, it is not finished yet, monsieur."

"Then work on it all night and show it to me all completed in the morning, or thy bones shall mourn thine idleness," said Pierre, with a wicked look in his little eyes. And he shut Hyacinthe into the shed with a smoky lamp, his tools, and the sandalwood cabinet.

It was nothing unusual. He had often been left before to finish a piece of work overnight while Pierre went off to his brandies. But this was Christmas Eve, and he was very tired. Even the scent of the sandalwood could not make him fancy he was warm. The world seemed to be a black place, full of suffering and despair.

"In all the world, I have no friend," said Hyacinthe, staring at the flame of the lamp. "In all the world there is not one to care whether I live or die. In all the world, no place, no heart, no love. Oh, kind

God, is there a place, a love for me in another world?

"There is no one to care for me," said Hyacinthe. And he even looked at the chisel in his hand, thinking that by a touch of that he might lose it all, and be at peace, somewhere not far from God. Only it was forbidden. Then came the tears, and great sobs shook him, so that he scarcely heard the gentle rattling of the latch.

He stumbled to the door, opening it on the still woods and the frosty stars. And a lad who stood outside in the snow said, "I see you are working late, comrade. May I come in?"

Hyacinthe brushed his ragged sleeves across his eyes and nodded "Yes." Those little villages strung along the great river see strange wayfarers at times. And Hyacinthe said to himself that surely here was such a one. Blinking into the stranger's eyes, he lost for a flash the first impression of youth, and received one of some incredible age or sadness. But the wanderer's eyes were only quiet, very quiet, like the little pools in the wood where the wild does went to drink. As he turned within the door, smiling at Hyacinthe and shaking some snow from his cap, he did not seem to be more than sixteen or so.

"It is very cold outside," he said. "There is a big oak tree on the edge of the fields that has split in the frost and frightened all the little squirrels asleep there. Next year it will make an even better home for them. And see what I found close by!" He opened his fingers and showed Hyacinthe a little sparrow lying unruffled in the palm.

"*Pauvrette!*" said the dull Hyacinthe. "*Pauvrette!* Is it then dead?" He touched it with a gentle forefinger.

"No," answered the strange boy, "it is not dead. We will put it here among the shavings, not far from the lamp, and it will be well by the morning."

He smiled at Hyacinthe again, and the shambling lad felt dimly as if the scent of the sandalwood were sweeter and the lamp-flame clearer. But the stranger's eyes were only quiet, quiet.

"Have you come far?" asked Hyacinthe. "It is a bad season for traveling, and the wolves are out."

"A long way," said the other. "A long, long way. I heard a child cry—"

"There is no child here," put in Hyacinthe. "Monsieur l'Oreillard says children cost too much money. But if you have come far, you must need food and fire, and I have neither. At the Cinq Châteaux you will find both."

The stranger looked at him again with those quiet eyes, and Hyacinthe fancied that his face was familiar. "I will stay here," he said. "You are late at work and you are unhappy."

"Why as to that," answered Hyacinthe, rubbing his cheeks and ashamed of his tears, "most of us are sad at one time or another, the good God knows. Stay here and welcome, if it pleases you, and you may take a share of my bed, though it is no more than a pile of balsam boughs and an old blanket in the loft. But I must work at this cabinet, for the drawers must be finished and the handles put on and the corners carved, all by the holy morning; or my wages will be paid with a stick."

"You have a hard master," put in the other, "if he would pay you with blows upon the feast of Noël."

"He is hard enough," said Hyacinthe, "but once he gave me a dinner of sausages and white wine; and once, in the summer, melons. If my eyes will stay open, I

will finish this by morning. Stay with me an hour or so, comrade, and talk to me of your travels, so that the time may pass more quickly."

"I will tell you of the country where I was a child," answered the stranger.

And while Hyacinthe worked, he told—of sunshine and dust, of the shadow of vine-leaves on the flat white walls of a house; of rosy doves on the roof; of the flowers that come out in the spring, anemones crimson and blue, and white cyclamen in the shadow of the rocks; of the olive, the myrtle, and almond; until Hyacinthe's fingers ceased working and his sleepy eyes blinked wonderingly.

"See what you have done, comrade," he said at last. "You have told me of such pretty things that I have done but little work for an hour. And now the cabinet will never be finished, and I shall be beaten."

"Let me help you," smiled the other. "I also was bred a carpenter."

At first Hyacinthe would not, fearing to trust the sweet wood out of his hands. But at length he allowed the stranger to fit in one of the little drawers. And so deftly was it done that Hyacinthe pounded his fists on the bench in admiration. "You have a pretty knack," he cried. "It seemed as if you did but hold the drawer in your hands a moment and hey! ho! it jumped into its place."

"Let me fit in the other little drawers while you rest a while," said the stranger. So Hyacinthe curled up among the shavings, and the other boy fell to work upon the little cabinet of sandalwood.

Hyacinthe was very tired. He lay still among the shavings, and thought of all the other boy had told him, of the hillside flowers, the laughing leaves, the golden bloom of the anise, and the golden sun upon the roads

until he was warm. And all the time the boy with the quiet eyes was at work upon the cabinet, smoothing, fitting, polishing.

"You do better work than I," said Hyacinthe once, and the stranger answered, "I was lovingly taught." And again Hyacinthe said, "It is growing toward morning. In a little while I will get up and help you."

"Lie still and rest," said the other boy. And Hyacinthe lay still. His thoughts began to slide into dreams, and he woke with a little start, for there seemed to be music in the shed, though he could not tell whether it came from the strange boy's lips, or from the shabby tools as he used them, or from the stars.

"The stars are much paler," thought Hyacinthe. "Soon it will be morning, and the corners are not carved yet. I must get up and help this kind one in a little moment. Only the music and the sweetness seem to fold me close, so that I may not move."

Then behind the forest there shone a pale glow of dawn, and in Terminaison the church bells began to ring. "Day will soon be here," thought Hyacinthe, "and with day will come Monsieur l'Oreillard and his stick. I must get up and help, for even yet the corners are not carved."

But the stranger looked at him, smiling as though he loved him, and laid his brown finger lightly on the four empty corners of the cabinet. And Hyacinthe saw the squares of reddish wood ripple and heave and break, as little clouds when the wind goes through the sky. And out of them thrust forth the little birds, and after them the lilies, for a moment living; but even as Hyacinthe looked, settling back into the sweet, reddish-brown wood. Then the stranger smiled again, laid all the tools in order, and, opening the door, went away into the woods.

Hyacinthe crept slowly to the door. The winter sun, half risen, filled all the frosty air with splendid gold. Far down the road a figure seemed to move amid the glory, but the splendor was such that Hyacinthe was blinded. His breath came sharply as the glow beat on the wretched shed, on the old shavings, on the cabinet with the little birds and the lilies carved at the corners.

He was too pure of heart to feel afraid. But "Blessed be the Lord," whispered Hyacinthe, clasping his slow hands, "for he hath visited and redeemed his people. But who will believe?"

Then the sun of Christ's day rose gloriously, and the little sparrow came from his nest among the shavings and shook his wings to the light.

One of eighty-three stories appropriate for use in celebration of the various holidays, compiled by Frances G. Wickes in a collection *Happy Holidays*. Reprinted by permission of Rand McNally and Company, New York.

A GLANCE BACKWARD, FORWARD, AND INWARD

How delightful have been these journeys through highways of the Enchanted Lands of Fancy. You have enjoyed every turn of the road and most of all the people who dwell in the haunts along the way. You have made friendships that will never cease.

Is it not with disappointment that you have come to the end of the journey when the far horizons beckon in every direction? But you need not stop. The charming by-ways circle about, and broad highways lead away wherever you turn your gaze. How will you choose your path?

In these three books you have enjoyed a little more than sixty tales. Loving friends of fairies and of children have selected these as the loveliest and best from amongst thousands of stories in which the fairy folk have been the actors. There are many other excellent stories. In fact, these lovers of you and of fairies have found more than four hundred that they are sure you will like. In another book they present a list of these tales and tell you about them—where you can find them, how good they are, and what they are good for. That book is published by The Macmillan Company and is called "A Guide to Books for Character," Vol. I, Fairy Tale, Myth, and Legend. That volume will help you to many a happy evening and joyous holiday.

You have felt all the time how likable are the people of fairy land. Whether young or old, rich or poor, peasant or prince, foolish or wise, your heart goes out

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to them. How can they be so charming? It must be because they have noble birth. They are all of them children of the Lord of Life and of Mother Earth. Furthermore, they are ruled over by a wonderful king and queen. They are mates who understand each other so well that their strength is as the strength of thousands. They rule a kingdom greater than is the world, for it takes in Life as well. The king has a tenderness to grace his strength; and the queen has strength almost to match her tenderness. The name of the king is Love; the name of the queen is Beauty.

13-1084



